The Bride of Shiva

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE EURASIAN

THE RESIDENCY

THE SONG OF SURRENDER

THE WONDER MIST

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The Bride of Shiva

An Indian Story

By

Henry Bruce

Author of

"The Eurasian," "The Residency," "The Song of Surrender,"
"The Wonder Mistress" etc

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Readers are requested to note that all the characters in this story are purely fictitious and the names are not to be used to refer to any real person or persons

In Memoriam

THOMAS GODDARD, BRIGADIER DIED OUT LANDS
1 NO, JULY 7th 1789, AGED ABOUT 4?

Little enough I know of you,
Goddard, who died upon this form
Yet sometimes, through the mists I view
The teak-built clipper which had come
A six months voyage, pressing home
To land the passenger it bore,
Who had no further strength to roam
Who could not reach his native shore

For Mister Hastings hired you
With some of those fine schemes he span
And gave you quite enough to do
To remedy what ills had done
With better luck you might have won
The glowing fortune I've
[illegible]
If you could only keep alive

I like the way in which you went
(A frantic exploit most agree)
Across the Indian continent
From upper ranges to the sea
And later, watch you languish free
Young general in three-cornered hat
Gaining or losing gallantly,
Adventurous over Guzerat

Who were the women of your life?
Knew you Dhra? Mada no Giand?
Had you, a world away, a wife?
Loved you the daughters of the land?
Such things we cannot understand.
We only know that in your span
Campaigning was for old and grand,
You lived and died an Englishman

HENRY BROCK

Land's End, June, 1919

The Bride of Shiva

CHAPTER I

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by.
The men who are good and the men who are bad
As good and as bad as I

I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man

Rose

"But, my dear Mrs. Smaler, you surely do not mean to tell me that you *stole* little Yamuna?"

Mrs. Fiflton never spoke a harsh word, and least of all to a guest at her table. But her position required her to be stern at times. Her eyes were fixed and her voice had a grave, but most of all such a sad tone.

The Goanese boy behind her chair, really a mature man whose life had been spent in her service, was interested, though neither mouth nor eyelid twitched. He looked such a gentleman in his shining duck, and was one, for all his bare feet and dark skin. The other table servant, differently dressed in Indian robes and with a red turban, was a native Christian, not born to the trade. He, though a good servant, did show some perceptible astonishment, could anyone have attended to him. Both men were used to a pretty wide variety at the table of the widowed missionary, who tried to keep her sympathies as wide as human kind. But the visitor is now

occupying the dining-room, and the verandas beyond were of a sort only occasionally seen there. Mrs Fulton was aware of some tolerance in entertaining them. Above all, it was the notoriously stolen native baby, of whom they made so much, who had caused a sensation in the mission compound on the hills.

"What shall I say, Elmer?" asked Mrs Smiler, turning from the table to her husband, who stood at a window, holding the baby in question, who had required some soothing.

"Say that you did it for the glory of God and the salvation of this little soul," Elmer Smiler answered firmly.

"So I did, Mrs. Fulton," answered Mrs. Smiler, taking courage. "And, what is more, I stole Yamuna, if you want to have the word, upon a direct command from Heaven. Let me tell you how it happened."

Mrs Fulton assented, though not with enjoyment. It was such trafficking with dishonesty which her favourite son, Edgar, now Dr. Fulton, had always brought up against the "pi" lot, as he comprehensively called them. The mother's thoughts went off in a flash to Edgar Fulton, whom she felt not to be doing well in a new venture in life. From the first he had not been able to get along with the mission in which he was born, enlightened and easy compared to many. He had gone further and fared worse. Some are only fitted for the secular life, which need not be worldly in spirit. She remembered how these same Smilers were favourites with her son, who saw their transparent goodness while wont to laugh at them.

There was something laughable about them even at the moment. Both were lean and lanky, about forty years of age, dressed in ill-fitting clothes of the cheapest material. Mr. Smiler wore a ready-made

white tie of the sort which is sometimes sold for evening use This was in token of his being a minister of the Peculiar Brethren, a name that peculiarly amused Edgar Fulton It was an American sect, and its members in India fell into the class of what used to be called Faith missions, who had to have faith rather than any assurance that a living wage would be paid them. Multitudes of devoted men and women died off like flies in the early days of these undertakings. The mission of the Peculiar Brethren has learned more wisdom now. It finds funds to feed, though not always to dress or to educate, those whom it sends out ten thousand miles to a trying climate

If Mr Smiler never looked well-fed, it was not the fault of his wife or of his mission It was the eager spirit, bent on doing good, if not always with intelligence, that kept him cadaverous. Yet his face expressed perception, and could light up, like his wife's, into a winning smile. Both had a sufficient Knowledge of the Marathi language, but not of the standard kept up in Mrs. Fulton's mission.

'Come, Jane," said Mr. Smiler, beaming down upon her from his height, with the beautiful face of the stolen baby pressed against his worn cheek, "Sister Fulton is ready to hear the story."

Mrs. Fulton hoped, with good reason, that she was not proud, yet this "Sister" from certain of the undoubted brethren and sisters in the less educated missions secretly afflicted her She knew that she ought not to mind it so much as she did. For a moment, half an hour before, it had withered her hospitable instincts to hear the announcement with which the crowded tonga drove up to her front door

"Sister, we are come" Mr Smiler had shouted, perhaps louder than he knew, and so little doubting his welcome that in the same instant Mrs Fulton

felt reproached as he pushed into the house, carrying the baby who was his special charge

Some of the very best people whom Mrs. Fulton knew, the salt of the earth, were liable to address her in that way. She tried not to assign the difference of feeling in regard to it to a difference in early training. Yet the arrival had given her a shock, which was to be repeated. She was thankful that her son, with his sense of humour, had not heard that annunciation. Yet it was certainly funny.

It had not been as much of a holiday as it might have been. The Smilers had written to her from the great mountain station of Mahableshwar, where even Faith missionaries find their way in these days, that they were returning to their home at Nasik in the lower Konkan, and would stop with her for a few hours in the afternoon for refreshment. It was the middle of June, the eve of the Monsoon, which is a tremendous event in Indian climate and life. Mahableshwar was nearly emptied. Mrs. Fulton was going down herself by the end of the week to the home of her life, Tulsipur, only thirty miles away, an easy drive for India. But, while she remained in this other house, placed at her disposal in connection with the Lord's work, eleven miles from Mahableshwar, on a slightly lower ridge, it was her delight to welcome and to speed travellers either way. Why was she there, with no killing journeys to face, if not to entertain congenial passers-by, more especially those of the household of faith?

As to that matter of address of which too much must not be made, Mrs. Fulton reflected upon the happy variety of endowment in married life. One has sense where the other lacks it, thus supplementing each other's needs, as was intended. Mrs. Smiler looked up to her husband in many ways, consulting him as just now. Yet she saw, as Mr. Smiler did not, that Mrs. Fulton disliked this

mannerism; and she abstained from it accordingly

Edgar Fulton was wont to say that Mrs. Smilor totally lacked every feminine charm. Yet he had several times enjoyed seeing her face light up, as now, when she embarked upon some theme that seemed great to her.

"It was when we were driving away from Naroli, Mrs. Fulton, two months ago, to come to Mahableshwar. We were all of us run down, and so thin that you might not have known us. I am going back now a well woman in comparison to what I was then. The breezes of Mahableshwar are indeed delightful, and have done much for us But the blessing of God, which came to us with little Yamuna, has done more She has been to us what profane people would call a mascot"

Mr. Smilor, Laeerpon gave a loud kiss to the little satin face beside his exclaiming: "God bless her!"

Now it was a point with Mrs Fulton that, while her life was given up to doing good among the people of India, she never quite enjoyed such personal contact with them She would tend native babies, take them in her arms as needed, but stop short at kissing them. It was only her reverence for Person which made her sanction such affection from him towards native Christian children. There was here no principle involved. It was only an unreasoning and very strong feeling of a white woman towards skins not white. Personally, she held that the Smilors had nothing less than an infatuation for Yamuna.

This conviction was shared by the three little Smilors, two girls and a boy.

They looked up with jealous eyes at the sound of the kiss. "Papa does not kiss us like that," was the thought in their hearts. They had not the nonpareil she of Yamuna, nor would they ever

have a thousandth part of her looks, which are a thing independent of colour. The Smiler children were well nigh repellent, ugly, pallid with lank hair and dressed so as to enhance their ugliness.

At Mrs Fulton's suggestion they had risen from the table after eating, and were playing about the room and the verandas, rather noisily, attended by an inferior sort of ayah. They were altogether an inferior group. Yet many mothers would have resented, as Mrs. Smiler did not, the marked affection shown, away from them by their father. Mrs. Fulton was thinking there was no sort of doubt as to which child her son, a connoisseur in looks, would have made much of.

Yamuna could not play about unprotected, particularly as the back veranda was a high one, from which she might have fallen many times her own length. She could not as yet make much noise, not lisp more than a few words. She was about two years old, though no one knew exactly; and, like most Indian babies, smaller for her age.

Proved breeding through some thousands of years, under the Caucasian features, are nowhere in the East would extend further than in the southern Konkan, running on into Malabar. The best that Europe can do in the way of an aristocratic face can only be likened, by those who know, to a Konkani Brahmin. Yamuna may not have been a Brahmin, but she was obviously of some good caste. She was of the lightest brown colour that is quite removed from white. Her plump little body was clad only in a pair of knickers, at an age when, in a native environment, she would have worn nothing. Her dark eyes, with drooping lashes, were a contrast to the pale orbs of the Smilers. By many standards she was immeasurably the better born. She could, withal, smile and gurgle, a jewel of a baby.

"Run to your mamma, my pet," said Mr. Smiler,

setting her down from where she had been sitting, on his broad palm Mrs Fulton had not been comfortable watching them She knew that the servants, though accustomed to her entertainment of natives, in a slightly different way, had their own thoughts about the costume, and the situation, which they would in part express to each other that night, sitting warming their fingers over a dung fire before going to bed on the ground

Yamuna easily ran across the room, with a hand held out to her by the Goanese servant, with a discreet laugh of admiration Mrs Smilo took her up, and resumed the story with the little head resting upon her bony shoulder

"We were packed in the tonga, but another one, just as you saw us half an hour ago, Mrs Fulton Our baggage had been sent on ahead, and we were self contained in that tonga, with nothing to keep us in Narolie By accident as it seemed at the moment, but really by the direction of Providence, we passed by the house of the retired Murali, Premabai. She is a homely, I daresay kindly stout woman of forty-five, with no harm about her except the worst. Having spent her youth, and a good deal more, in the service of Shiva, she now rears others to the same infamous trade She is thus a peculiar instrument of Satan. Besides her own daughters, who are now all Muralis, she makes a regular business of buying little girls of all ages to train up She does this with skill and with capital, being a rich woman Can you imagine a more infamous occupation? I know you cannot You know India better than I do, and how cheap human flesh and blood, with the precious souls that go with them, sometimes become You may even have paid a few rupees in famine time to get a promising child for your orphanage—at least I know I have!'

The two women looked at each other with a

comprehending smile. "There are few engaged in such work who have not done such things.

"The motive makes all the difference," continued Mrs. Smiley.

"I cannot admit that," said Mrs. Fulton. "That is a dangerous maxim. An immoral plan which may lead to any thing."

Mrs. Smiley looked sincerely distressed.

"Hear my story, and then tell me if you blame me, dear Mrs. Fulton—you who are so like a mother in Israel!"

Mrs. Fulton was beginning to be told that of late years, though she was a little past fifty. Her dignity, her experience of more than thirty years in India for she had come out very young—and a certain large benevolence justified the comparison.

"We know that all trafficking in human beings is forbidden by the Mayan Penal Code, as well as by higher laws. But what about stealing human beings—kidnaping? I imagine there are greater penalties for that even by human laws?"

Both the Smileys were so concerned that Mrs. Fulton felt some compunction.

"At least, Pomalan had been breaking the law every time she procured a child by the help of money; and another law when she dedicated her in the temple."

"That does not make kidnapping right. But come out on the veranda to enjoy the air."

Thus the servants, in whom Mrs. Fulton had detected signs of undue interest, were deprived of the climax of the tale.

The party adjourned to the veranda, which was both high and deep, and furnished in some measure as a sitting room. Below it stretched quite a little dell, beyond which wound the road to Mahableshwar. The features of this mission compound, besides those common to many in India, was the

clumps of feathery bamboos, witching with the delicate tracery of their crests, so far above the ground as to make it hard to think that the bamboo is rightly but a grass.

Mrs. Fulton was tall, with hair hardly grey, and a face which was coming to be like a benediction. She had largely made herself, and was mellowing in character from year to year. Yet was it possible, as Mrs Smiler thought, that she did not wish to hear the story of the abduction? The law of kindness was in her mouth; but in truth she dreaded what she might hear.

Mrs. Smiler continued, as soon as she had been arranged with Yamuna upon a sofa beside Mrs. Fulton:

"You know what a fight I am waging against the great false god Shiva—in the name of Jehovah. I had long kept my eye upon Lakshmabai. I had been hearing a good deal for weeks past about a beautiful infant whom Premabai had brought, to rear for Shiva's service. Some of my informants said that Yamuna was a Brahmin child, and others of the goldsmith caste, who are often equally fair. You cannot tell us what you are, can you, little darling? But for myself, I believe that Yamuna is a Brahmin. It was said that Premabai had paid two hundred rupees for her. Larger sums are sometimes given in this infamous traffic. But with the chances of life in India there is risk in buying anyone so young as Yamuna."

The baby crowed, and gave a jump on Mrs Smiler's knee. Only beauty so unmistakable would have made the transaction possible. Mrs Fulton let Yamuna grasp one of her fingers.

"That the servants of Shiva should seek their victims so early!" exclaimed Mrs. Smiler, her voice thrilling with emotion. "Shall the servants of our Lord be less daring? Shall they hesitate to defy

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"That the servants of Shiva should seek their victims so early!" exclaimed Mrs. Smiler, her voice thrilling with emotion. "Shall the servants of our Lord be less daring? Shall they hesitate to defy

if necessary the imperfect laws of men? Anyhow, I did not hesitate I had seen Yamuna by chance, and felt strongly drawn towards her. 'One of these little ones' I thought that I was commissioned to save her There I was as I have said, on our last morning in Naroli, driving away with scarcely a thought of her only concerned with the baggage and our own children. It was the Lord who caused the heathen driver to go through the street where Premabai lived When I saw where we were— I put my hand on his arm and told him to drive slowly. My soul was strangely moved prepared for whatever might offer. And behold, on the earthen terrace in front of Premabai's house there was not a person in sight, only this little love, playing unconcernedly in the shade, as naked as she was born

I said to the driver 'Stop!' and he stopped. At that moment a voice whispered in my bosom as plainly as I am speaking to you: 'Jane Smiley, take up that child for the glory of My name.' I am sure that it was the Lord addressing me. I whipped out of the front seat. I can be pretty spry when there is need for it; and within a minute I was back with Yamuna, who seemed to know that it was for her good, and who did not cry. Mr. Smiley from the back seat had seen, and did not interfere, knowing that I was guided 'Drive now for your life!' I cried to the tongawalla 'A rupee extra if we get out of this without a row!' He did not like it, being a worshipper of Shiva himself, and sympathising with Premabai rather than with us. Yet he did drive fast enough to get us out of the town before the theft, for I admit it, was discovered. In a native State, so bigoted and behindhand as Kanhala, anything might have happened It would not have done to sneak Yamuna like that had we been staying on in Naroli. But was it not Providential that we

were going hundreds of miles away, right out of the State, with the baggage sent on ahead?"

Mrs Fulton did not feel so sure of the part which Providence had played. She was herself absolutely upright: yea and yea, nay and nay. She did not like that detail about the baby having been lifted, as the missionary family were in the act of leaving Kanhala State for a time, instead of staying to face the music. She remembered what her son was too apt to say about the occasional slyness of the unregenerate. Yet, though she could not approve, she lifted Yamuna's flower-like hand to her lips.

"However it happened, I hope that this dear little one is saved, for this life and the next. But I wonder that you dare to take her back to Narsh, even if you return yourselves. Surely the whole place was in a ferment. Did not your Christians suffer for it?"

"We never heard that they did, and our bungalow has been quite safe." Mrs Smiler was disappointed, not to say huffed at having unable to get the sanction which she wished. She was cute in ways that Mrs. Fulton was not.

"This is our own little one, given to us by the Lord," she went on decisively. "We intend to keep her while we live."

"Yes, but have you a right to her?" asked Mrs Fulton, whose conscience was fundamentally just, and sometimes obstinate.

Mr. Smiler came to the rescue of his wife, who was nonplussed. He was contented to leave most of the talking to her, at public meetings in America and in private life, since he had not the gift. But he was as deep a fanatician, if that is the word.

Resting Yamuna to her favourite perch upon his hand, he announced:

"Sister Fulton, I hold with my wife in all that she has said and done. I would have stolen Yamuna

myself but that I was encumbered with the children on the back seat, and Jane is the number But it would have been flying in the face of Providence not to snatch her up. Now that we have her we mean to hold her against all the powers of Satan or of Shiva."

"They are the same evil being, I believe," exclaimed Mrs Smiler

"If you are determined to keep Yamuna at all costs, whether or no, right or wrong, why not ship her to England or America?" asked Miss Fulton. Her conscience might have winked at an heroic measure like that

"Because we cannot afford it, nor do we see the need, Sister."

"We could not spare her really," said Mrs. Smiler wistfully "She has become more dear to us than I can say. In fact our own children sometimes feel hurt and neglected in comparison."

Mrs Fulton glanced at the little Smilers, and could not wonder. It would not have been in her to set aside her own even in appearance for the sake of a stranger and a native Yet she held her peace, reflecting that this family underwent, in the same cause, risks and hardships which she was not called upon to endure, besides uncongenial contacts which she would not. She was humble enough to admit that their reward might be the greater

"So you think it quite safe to take back Yamuna where she grew? I would not like you to lose her now. Almost anything is possible in Kanuda State, as Mysore is beginning to find out." In truth Dr. Fulton's experiences had not yet begun, nor did his mother know the half of what he had already seen. "The people of India are terrible in the way of furtive vengeance, lying low and springing upon you at a favourable moment. This is specially true in a native State, where they abound in their

own sense I would not like to discourage you. There may have been difficulties about their following you to Mahableshwar with any legal process It would be just like them to await your return."

"Have no fear for us, Sister," said Mr Smiler in a tone which settled things. "The Lord is abundantly able to protect his chosen. What I fear is that great cloud overspreading the west. It may catch us before we get down the mountain to Wai."

He stood at the parapet of the verandah, still holding Yamuna. When the fair Aryans first invaded India they described the aborigines whom they encountered as "in colour like a dark blue cloud." That was the manner of cloud, common at the opening of the Monsoon, which Mr Smiler faced with some anxiety "Both he and Mrs Fulton had cut it rather close in their plans for getting down from the hills The clumps of feathery bamboos were now tossing wildly in a gusty breeze, their stalks scraping each other with a metallic sound; and there was a soughing in the other foliage.

The others rose and joined him The wind was getting chilly. They soon had to retire within the house, shutting the doors to the west. The red dust of the hills was whirling in the wind.

"This is Thursday," observed Mr Smiler, "We have a complicated journey to get through if we are to reach Naroli by Saturday evening. A single slip in the time table will spoil everything, for we cannot travel on the Sabbath."

"Of course we cannot, Elmer," said Mrs Smiler. Mrs Fulton made no remark She might get drenched in getting down to Tulsipur on the Saturday, as planned. But hers was a simple problem compared to that of the Smilers. They had before them one of the journeys which there is little purpose in living in India if one cannot take in the dry season.

They had to reach the station at Wathar, thirty

miles onward, by midnight, which is the favourite Indian hour for entraining or for changing trains With only one change they would reach Kanhala town, the capital of the State, where the railway ended, the next forenoon Thence they would have their work cut out to drive, partly by country tracts, the hundred miles and more which still divided them from their little bungalow on an inlet of the sea Between Kanhala and Naroli stretched the line of the same Ghats, there some hundreds of miles further south than the Mahableshwar range, and lower. But as Mr. Smiler remarked, they would take some crossing If the Monsoon broke in the meantime and the floods were out, certain unbridged rivers on the way would be an awkward proposition

"Never mind," he put away anxiety "The Lord will not suffer his elect to suffer beyond that which they are able That is right, Sister Fulton, I am glad that Jane is telling you about her conflict with Shiva. It is nothing less than a crusade."

"Eddie calls Shiva the greatest god in India," said Mrs Fulton. But Eddie knew little of any gods

"He is the wickedest, the meanest, the most ruthless," pursued Miss Smiler, her voice plangent with emotion. She was an enthusiast on the subject. "Shiva is the modern Moloch. The greatest maiden tribute paid in this world goes to him. And it is to save the little ones among his victims, those who know not then right hand from their left, that I have given myself in particular Many others feel with me " I am sure you do, dear Mrs Fulton. It is for this that we have founded our Rescue League Is it not a worthy object ?"

Like every decent person, and with religious impulse besides, Mrs. Fulton felt that it was worthy. She kindled at some of the details given. Honour, she thought, must go to those who thwart themselves

into such a conflict with an unreasoning passion, which stayed not to count the cost. If they sometimes ran up against a stone wall——. They had their rewards, transports which perhaps the more conventional missionary workers missed. They too were labourers in the vineyard, good and faithful servants

"Have you ever heard of a book called 'Paradise Lost?'" asked Mrs Smiler

Now it happened that this was the one long poem with which Mrs. Fulton was familiar

"Because it lately came my way. The author must have been a devout man He has one idea which struck me much I am disposed to agree with it, since there is nothing in the Bible to the contrary. John Milton thinks that the devils described in the Old Testament, who fell with their leader Satan, are the same as the heathen gods of Palestine and Greece and Rome." You are not obliged to accept the idea, but there is much to recommend it. If so, those gods are now withered like autumn leaves. India is the only country where idolatry is still rampant Many are the vile gods here, against all of whom we fight But the worst is the monstrous Shiva, with the thousand and three names, in whom stirs the very soul of Satan."

Mrs Fulton, upon reflection, was highly disposed to agree. "Shiva shall have his own," she quoted.

"He shall not—he shall not have Yanuma! India has been Shiva's own hitherto. Now the masses are turning to Christ, a hundred thousand at a time India is Christ's, and He shall have His own."

The two women, both so genuinely good, found more points of agreement than ever before. Mrs. Fulton wondered that many missionaries of her class passed by on the other side from the Smilers, scarcely admitting them as fellow-workers. The

American missionaries in Kanhala, for example, a place through which the Smilers would pass travel-stained on the morrow, would not have entertained them as she was doing. Perhaps those were peculiarly hard and dry soils in their articles was a special provision that whenever the funds for other purposes ran short the comfortable salaries of the missionaries should be paid in full. Mrs. Fulton, on the contrary, had come out with her husband on an understanding with the heroic touch that their salaries should be so much *or less*. Yet even the Americans in Kanhala had their reasons. They ignored the Smilers largely from fear of being compromised by them, as they would have been.

Mrs. Fulton prayed apart with Mrs Smiler, towards whom she felt drawn as a true sister, and had a little meeting with the children. She fed them all once more, and contributed ten rupees to the Rescue League.

Mrs Smiler was encouraged, and felt that she was winning upon one never hard to win.

"Or, Fulton is at Kanhala, is he not?" she asked towards the end, with some timidity. That was the way the subject was always approached in Evangelical circles, gingerly, at least in his mother's presence. For those among whom he had been born, and with whom he could not work, Edgar Fulton kept a liking bordering upon affection. But they had no such feeling for him. Mrs Smiler was an exception, in that she professed a warm regard for the young doctor at large, but her husband judged him with severity.

"You will pass within a mile or two of Edgar to-morrow," said Mrs. Fulton, her face lighting up. "He would perhaps have met you at the station had he known, though he is hardly his own master at present. But I may say that you are favourites of his."

Mrs. Smiler was pleased.

"We are interested in your son, who was always good to us. Is he likely to stay much longer where he is?"

"I do not think so," said Mrs. Fulton gravely. "Nor can I desire it for his sake. Edgar has not complained, but I feel that he is not in the right place. His engagement has half a year longer to run."

"How he ever took up with those Ritualists!" exclaimed Mrs. Smiler. "It must take a great deal of grace to stand them. I declare, I feel sorry for Dr. Fulton every time I think of him!"

Mr. Smiler was about to interpose "It's his own fault." But he swallowed the words as he looked at Mrs. Fulton.

"It's not as bad as that," said Mrs. Fulton. "But Edgar's employers mistook him, and that he is not their associate, and it is just as well."

"I should think so! I must confess that the Ritualist missionaries of Kanhala vilt me, whether with or without their long robes. I tell Elmer not to judge the Church of England from them. Perhaps there is some personal feeling in the matter. The American missionaries do not approve, and hardly acknowledge us, even as countrymen, yet I feel that they are fellow-workers who would help in an emergency. But we cannot feel so about the Ritualist Mission, nor do they admit anything in common with us. Their eyes are fixed upon another goal, passing over us completely."

The two mothers looked at each other, and sighed, yet were discreet. Edgar Fulton was at the end of a disastrous experiment which had made some sensation in missionary circles.

"You probably know," said Mrs. Fulton, "that the greatest of all temples of Shiva is not far from one of the Ritualist mission stations in the south

American missionaries in Kanhala, for example, a place through which the Smilers would pass to-morrow, stained on the morrow, would not have entertained them as she was doing. Perhaps there were a peculiarly hard and dry set: in their article was a special provision that whenever the funds for other purposes ran short the comfortable salaries of the missionaries should be paid in full. Mr. Fulton, on the contrary, had come out with her husband on an understanding with the Board that their salaries should be so much or less. Yet even the Americans in Kanhala had their reason. They ignored the Smilers largely from fear of being compromised by them, as they would have been.

Mrs. Fulton prayed apart with Mrs. Smiler, towards whom she felt drawn as a true sister; and had a little meeting with the children. She fed them all once more, and contributed two rupees to the Rescue League.

Mrs. Smiler was encouraged, and felt that she was winning upon one never hard to win.

"Oh, Fulton is at Kanhala, is he not?" she asked towards the end, with some timidity. That was the way the subject was always approached in Evangelical circles, gingerly, at least in his mother's presence. For these among whom he had been born, and with whom he could not work, Edgar Fulton kept a liking bordering upon affection. But they had no such feeling for him. Mrs. Smiler was an exception, in that she professed a warm regard for the young doctor at large; but her husband judged him with severity.

"You will pass within a mile or two of Edgar to-morrow," said Mrs. Fulton, her face lighting up. "He would perhaps have met you at the station had he known, though he is hardly his own master at present. But I may say that you are favourites of his."

Mrs. Smiler was pleased.

"We are interested in your son, who was always good to us. Is he likely to stay much longer where he is?"

"I do not think so," said Mrs. Fulton gravely. "Nor can I desire it for his sake. Edgar has not complained, but I feel that he is not in the right place. His engagement has half a year longer to run."

"How he ever took up with those Ritualists!" exclaimed Mrs. Smiler. "It must take a great deal of grace to stand them! I decline, I feel sorry for Dr. Fulton every time I think of him!"

Mr. Smiler was about to interpose: "It's his own fault," But he swallowed the words as he looked at Mrs. Fulton.

"It's no use to tell us," said Mrs. Fulton. "But Edgar's employers make him feel that he is not their first choice, and it is hard as well."

"I should think so! I must confess that the Ritualist missionaries of Kanhula vilt me, whether with or without their long robes. I tell Elmer not to judge the Church of England from them. Perhaps there is some personal feeling in the matter. The American missionaries do not approve, and hardly acknowledge us, even as countrymen, yet I feel that they are fellow-workers who would help in an emergency. But we cannot feel so about the Ritualist Mission; nor do they admit anything in common with us. Their eyes are fixed upon another goal, passing over us completely."

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of your State Edgar was in the neighbourhood earlier in the year"

"I have not been to Lingam, but its influence radiates right across Kanhala State and India. Premabai, for instance, belongs there, though she lives in the Konkan. But you have given me fresh heart to fight the iniquity, dear Mrs Fulton."

"You have opened my eyes to certain things, Mrs Smiler, for which I thank you" That was the best thing about Mrs. Fulton, she never became too old to learn "And to show it, would you like me to keep little Yamuna a while, for security, rather than take her back into a native State? In British India we have at least the protection of a government which has been obliged to proclaim itself Christian. Anything would be better than for Yamuna to grow up a Murali, a bride of Shiva!"

"Do not fear that I know how much this offer means from you, that there is no need; and, as I have said, we could not spare her. Look at her now!"

The lovely child was asleep on one arm of Mr. Smiler as he came up to say good-bye; for the tonga was at the door.

"God bless you, Sister Fulton! We shall not forget the refreshment you have given us, specially as it will be the last we shall have for some days. We have lingered too long on these pleasant hills. I do not like the look of the sky"

One might well not like it The level sunlight of six o'clock lay upon the greenery of the little avenue, which was varied in two places by a vivid splash of colour, one crimson, one scarlet, consisting of foliage plants, regular trees, which bore leaves of those hues. such is the occasional colouring of India At another point was a father witching cypress, which used to set ringing in Dr Fulton's brain.

For the gods, in whose keeping the door is
That opens on all who draw breath,
Gave the myrtle to love, ivy fidelity,
The cypress to death

But overhead the sky closed in like a copper bowl Loose leaves and twigs, as well as red dust, were now driven before the increasing wind, not yet a gale, the moaning of which suggested great distances and elemental forces A glorious autumn phenomenon, slowly prepared and fitfully from any haste, one which observers have stayed up on the mountains—at some risk—to enjoy, was at hand The bursting of the Monsoon is everywhere admirable, but far less violent upon the plains

"I do not think it will come to-night," said Mrs Fulton; "and, anyhow, if you can reach Mariyat are safe."

She kissed Mrs Smith, a thing she did not gladly do, and with some apprehensions watched eight persons, half of them small, packed into the tonga Standing at the entrance to the low-pitched front veranda, with her face like a blessing, she followed her guests as they drove around the curve, then out upon the main road, past the tiny library building opposite her grounds She had perhaps never heard the name of Terence, yet nothing that was human was foreign to her

Mrs Fulton had energy too. Further examining the sky, and consulting the servants who stood grouped in the background, she decided to put forward her return to Tulsipur by some thirty hours. Her tonga was ordered for the next morning, instead of Saturday afternoon as originally planned. This entailed a busy evening for all concerned Mrs Fulton reached Tulsipur, as she deserved to, without a bad wetting. But the Monsoon came the same afternoon.

CHAPTER II

Borne far across the Indian sea
In cloudy reservoirs of rain
The Monsoon breaks magnificently
On Mahabaleshwar's high plateau,
Whence the five sacred rivers flow
In freshet-flood to southern plain
Unpublished.

THE Smilers had tolerable luck only during the first night of their journey.

The loaded tonga had dashed down the eight miles of the descent to Wai, and they passed the first of the sacred cities on the Krishna while there was still some light to distinguish the half mile of temples with stone steps along the sandy river front.

The remainder of the drive with relays of ponies, did not go as badly as it might have, but the heat was oppressive on the plains. The Smilers reached Wathar in time for their train, in which they had one of the third-class apartments, mere boards, yet secluded from native thronging, which are reserved for poor Europeans. Yamuna, being wrapped up, was smuggled in with them upon both trains. If she lived to take journeys with them at a later age this would not be possible.

They reached Kanhala, bedraggled enough, and unfed, well on in the next forenoon. Here Mr. Smiler found that the tonga which he had engaged for their onward journey to Naroli was not ready, could not be ready until the next morning. Their heavy luggage had accumulated at Kanhala and would have to go on by bullock cart. After an attempt to camp out in the railway station, which

was not allowed, the party had to adjourn to the travellers' bungalow.

All who have travelled in India must be grateful for the shelter and the elemental needs supplied by this institution. In a larger place like Kamala the travellers' bungalow even runs to some comforts.

Domestic life depends upon one woman. While without Mrs. Fulton's gowns for home making, Mrs. Smiler had yet a mother's heart. She was now able to bathe and feed and put to bed her three children and Yamuna. This, with the help of the ayah, she did with a happy heart, singing in a crooning voice, and thinking of the little home at Naroli which seemed appreciably nearer. The children, too, were excited at the prospect of return to certain native playmates and humble pets, including a goat and their father's white pony, Moti.

The Monsoon had broken on the 8th party a day or so earlier than on the Mahableshwar range, and without violence, so that the Smilers ran into it imperceptibly in the course of the railway journey. There seemed to be no sort of threat in it—a mellow downpour of small rain which cooled the air deliciously.

There was some trouble or hitch about the hired tonga. Messages, notes scribbled under difficulties, were going back and forth during most of this day between Mr. Smiler and the crabbedly dishonest Parsi contractor who had engaged to have the tonga ready that morning. Its being ready depended upon relays having been laid, as the word goes, along a hundred miles of devious mountain road. Towards the end of the day the missionary had to sally out in the rain to encounter the Parsi, a meeting in which he would be hampered by his Quakerish ideas as to non-resistance and submission to evil in the name of the Lord.

As planned, the hundred odd miles south-westward to Naroli could have been covered in two not very hard days, the Friday and Saturday. Now Friday had been lost for progress, though rather needed for rest. The Monsoon had come a day or two sooner than calculated, putting out various plans, though always welcome. The Smilers had cut it too close. Any fool could tell that after the rain had been descending on the mountains in a solid sheet for about three days the streams which flowed from there to right and left would be in flood. Several of these had to be crossed on the way to Naroli. The obvious rule of safety was to get through before the floods had time to come down. But Mr. Smiler was increasing difficulties by his scruples. There loomed ahead not only the Monsoon, but the Sabbath.

"I've done the best I can, Jane," he declared, returning from the contractor's at the dim ending of the day. "Kranji will give us the tonga for Saturday morning, but for no other day. I laboured in vain to make him say Monday instead, so that we might have the Sabbath here in quietness. 'Take it or leave it, Sahib,' he said. 'It is no consideration for me to send my horses out in this downpour, which will become worse and not better.'"

"So he wants to make us travel on Saturday and the Sabbath?" Mrs. Smiler enquired anxiously.

"That's about the size of it. Now you know I will not obey the laws of man in preference to those of God. Only there would have been no use in saying so to that benighted sun-worshipper. I could not roar at him, or go for him with my stick, as perhaps Dr. Fulton close by would have done. But I think I can—I can get around him."

In other words, to deceive the deceiver, always in the name of the Lord.

"So you intend, Elmer—?"

"So I intend to start out to-morrow morning,

as if we were making the journey in two consecutive days. No other way is possible. But never will I travel on the Sabbath day. One day's driving, if we keep at it, ought to bring us to the pleasant little bungalow at the top of the Mal Ghat, where Sitaram must now be waiting with Moti. I have always wanted to have a clear day there, instead of going on the next morning. At last we can have such a day, preaching the Gospel to the humble mountaineers. But go beyond Mal Ghat on the Lord's day? I will not! There will be no Framji there, smoking cigarettes like a European worldling, to bully me. The driver dare not do so. He will be glad of a day of idleness saying that I bullied him. Let him! Framji's further relays which will be waiting between Mal Ghat and Narol, can even wait away!"

The little Smilers giggled at this, and then he smiled upon them.

"That is the way, my pets, in which we must sometimes, without violence, and for a good reason, get the better of the powers of unrighteousness. I have paid for the entire journey; and who can answer for the mischances of the road?"

He was a good deal pleased with himself: in a shopkeeper it might have been called smug self-satisfaction.

"The tongas are smaller here than at Mahableshwar," he went on. "I fear it will be a tight fit to-morrow; in fact, Gopalrao Ayah will have to be left behind with the baggage. Beyond Mal Ghat it will be more comfy for the rest of you, since I shall be on Moti. But fancy their wanting to make us arrive on the scene of our labours on the Sabbath! Not for the whole world would I do such a thing!"

He had picked up Yamuna, and announced the noble decision, not with folded arms, but with the baby crowing within them. The pale little Smilers

were discussing, in a suppressed way, the effect upon themselves of the modified plans. They regretted the additional day's delay in meeting their friend, the she goat They did not grieve for the ayah, while Moti would be at Mal Ghat.

Mrs Smiler did not oppose her husband's decision In principle she was bound to approve it If she still looked worried it was something else that troubled her

"Elmer," she said, "I am sure that you have acted for the best Only, do you think that we can spare a whole day to spend at Mal Ghat bungalow? The rivers on both sides of the Ghats are rising each hour. If the Lord brings us through in safety as far as Mal Ghat do you think He would really ask us to linger there over two nights?"

"Would He not? Is there any tampering or compromising with the Lord's commands? Jane, I ask you, would you travel on the Sabbath to avoid a flooded river?"

Mrs Smiler drooped at this, having much reverence for her husband as a man of faith.

He pursued his advantage. "Would you?"

"I would pray," she said, "to be delivered from such a dilemma, and am very content to let you decide."

"That is right I suppose you have not been out anywhere?"

"Where could I go? and whom do we know in all Kanhaja?"

"No one, that is true, except that young Lumb, Dr. Tulton"

"He is the only one here who would show us kindness if he could I declare, Elmer, it does seem a shame that in a centre of Christian work like this in a heathen land there is none to give us a hand-shake, a God bless you! If we called on the American missionaries, some of whom are from our own

State, they would be stiff and perhaps nasty They are at least our fellow-workers, we feel, if they do not We might get Dr. Fulton into serious trouble by going to see him As for the inhuman ritualist with whom he abides, they would not receive us or shake hands I believe they would be capable of turning their servants or their dogs upon us!"

"This is one of the crosses which we must be glad to bear gladly for the sake of our profession. It is even to be looked at askance and unkindly because we carry our faith further than do the lazy heathen Christians. We are advanced, as the ritualists also call themselves. Our reward will be the greater in the other world"

It was certainly hard lines that the Smileys, whose lives were given to doing good, could find no fellowship Here were a hundred Christian families, swagger or humble European, and how much intensely interested in their own lives and cares, so in those of their neighbours, but not one friend of The missionaries here were upon social terms, more or less close, with the Residency, then tenanted by a young man of singular merit. Next door the native city, with a court where romantic happenings were almost the order of the day. The Smileys could call nowhere. Between them and the Residency set, the social difference, if not the religious, was too marked They would no more have dreamt of calling upon the Maharajah and his entourage, as the other missionaries did often enough to keep in touch should any occasion arise. Perhaps it would have been a piece of luck for the Smileys to do so, since they had broken the laws of the state and were now returning within its borders defiantly bringing the stolen baby, whose abduction had created more than a small sensation.

Nothing went well the next day, as Mr Smiley had planned. The tonga, which was crowded

small, was late in starting. Even without the ayah the Smilers made more than regulations allowed, and were sorely cramped. The relays were far from ready according to time-table Yet the party did get forward somehow, about sixty miles before the fall of night, instead of the seventy miles to Mal Ghat

It rained the whole day, with increasing steadiness Everyone was wet to the skin. As in the Sandwich Islands, travellers in these parts can to a great degree get wet with impunity because of the genial warmth But the country is a little less warm than Hawaii The difference allows room for chills such as Mrs. Smiler and one of her children got Chills and fever are no joke in a malarial land.

They travelled for most of the day through a fine and fertile country of no distinguished beauty Only late in the afternoon did they begin to ascend the slopes of the Ghats These were lower than at Mahableshwar, pretty rather than grand, but usher ing the traveller, after twenty or thirty miles of wandering, into the promised land of the Konkan, with its witching scenery and afflicting climate If the Smilers had had attention for them, peaks arose on every hand with shapes varying from a corkscrew to a dreadnought.

There was no use in trying to push through to Mal Ghat on that Saturday afternoon, docked of an hour or two of daylight by the heavy clouds Wheeled traffic is not carried on thereabouts by night any more than along the Jhelum Valley road into Kashmir. Mr. Smiler was fain to beg shelter at a very different sort of wayside bungalow than Mal Ghat.

> My wife is weary and would be at rest,
> For we have travelled very far to-day.
> We must be content with such as you have

On the Sunday morning Mr. Smiler awoke from a too vivid dream with a start which disturbed his wife

"Has anything happened, Elmer?"

"No, I think not," said he, still rubbing his eyes and trying to shake off the impression.

"Tell me about it dearest. You seem troubled."

"Not exactly, for there is nothing to be troubled about. You know I do not tell my dreams as a rule. But a repeated dream: I never had that before"

"I do not mind listening to dreams. Speak out if it will relieve you to do so."

"It was not a dream of action—none. Only a landscape, a setting as it were for something that was probably going on, but what I could not make out. I will tell you. I had exactly the same vision on waking in the travellers' bungalow at Kanhalt yesterday morning, though I did not speak of it. It is the repetition that has rubbed it in to me. Some might call it uncanny, but we know that our Lord has a purpose in all that he sends us."

"True. But what was the landscape?"

"A manner, as it might appear in a picture, where a road passes through the bed of a small river. Between the road and the river, on the side upstream, a temple of one chamber in honour of the enemy whom we specially fight in this land, he destroyer Shiva. There was of course, in so small a shrine, no image, only a curved smooth stone, daubed with their hideous red paint. The temple, I could not help noting, was not of the grey Deccan granite, but of some composite stuff lightly whitewashed: therefore in the Konkan. In front of it sat cross-legged on a reed mat a *bairagi*, a devotee of Shiva as I could tell by the red paint about him, telling his beads. He was not of the most offensive, yet his hair and parts of his body were covered with white ashes. Close beyond, right across the road in the heathenish way which is allowed in this country, flowed the river. It was not in flood: it did not look

deep or dangerous, though it was pretty wide. On the surface of the river, downwards, was a blur, something which I could not make out. And that was all."

"Why, Elmer, that is the crossing over the Nilganga, near the fifth milestone from Naroli. It is of the approach to our own dear home that you have been dreaming!"

"I suppose I have been," the dreamer admitted, confused. "Yet it seems so far from reality, and only clear-cut in itself."

"That is it; and it shows where your thoughts are. To think that we might be over the ford and at home before night."

"That is a temptation, Jane. Remember whose holy day it is."

"I do remember. Yet hearken to the rain, outside and inside! Elmer, this is no place in which to spend the day, and another night? Ten miles to the Ridge, where there is a watertight building, and Sridham is waiting for us. Less than forty miles from there to our home, if we can push on. The horses are ready, it would seem to many only the honest thing to make use of them as arranged."

"Get thee behind me, Satan!" exclaimed Mr Smiler, not meaning it unkindly. Nor did his wife take it so, but laughed although she was ill.

He sat up in bed, a lank figure, running his fingers through his too long hair, and looked about the bleak apartment, where the water dripped in through several leaks. This was the only room in the building, which was a native rest house rather than a bungalow for European travellers. Yamuna was on, rather than in, one bed with the Sailers. Their own children, lacking completely dry clothing, were on the other bedstead, where the younger girl moaned in her sleep.

There was no sort of skilled service, since the ayah

was behind, and the groom, who would have been useful in many ways, was before them. Here was not the comfort which even Faith missionaries must have if they are to keep alive in India. And still the rain descended, with a perceptible increase.

"I am not well" pleaded Mrs. Smiler. "Sarah had fever and chills during the night. I never thought that I should urge you to travel on the Sabbath day. But now if you *could* persuade your conscience even to going on as far as Mal Ghat bungalow! It seems almost a matter of life and death, I do not speak only of our health. But hearken to that rain! If it keeps on like that for another twenty-four hours what will be the state of the Nilganga? I feel now that we ought to get through to Nanoli without a moment of unnecessary delay. If your dream was of the Lord it must be a warning."

But she had touched the wrong chord in the mind of the fanatic.

"On the contrary," he said, "if the dream was of the Lord, as I now begin to think, it was an assurance. For the river in my dream was not flooded or violent, it did not look dangerous. I believe the Lord means to assure me that we need have no fear on the subject. Meanwhile his commandment is to remain."

It was a fixture. Nothing could now move him from his resolution. Nor did Mrs. Smiler much desire to. She was not sure of her own ground. Her conscience misgave her, as well as her physical forces. When her husband read my texts to her she was obliged to respect his conscience.

The day passed in misery, pouring upon that or all. There was some food, but little to drink. Mr. Smiler nearly came to blows with Pearce over a liver, who might have been glad to help out of his master in a pleasant place like Mal Ghat, but not ere. There was no telegraph office within

great distance or he might have tried to communicate with Kanhaia Mr Smiler, who most of all counted on having a clear day at Mal Ghat, seemed destined never to have it.

His children were sullenly rebellious. With pasty unhealthy faces, they stood about in that leaky hovel. Under no circumstances would they have been allowed to have a very good time on the Sabbath; but this dwarfed all experience.

"Papa" they once ventured to ask "could we not go only as far as Mal Ghat? Sitaram is there with Moti It would not be a great sin to go ten miles on the Sabbath We could make up for it by keeping to-morrow morning holy instead."

But the hopeful idea was nipped in the bud

"No, my dears," said Mr Smiler, who had many of a father's feelings "that would never do" And in his own vocabulary he proceeded to explain patiently but explicitly, why not, telling them about has dream It did not move him that even Yamuna, who lived in his arms, was drooping

The dreadful day passed interminably in that nameless place Ramji's driver was heard congratulating himself that not he but another would have the passage of the Nilganga to make on the following day

"Do you really think it was safe to linger by the way as we have done?" Mrs Smiler once asked "It might seem to some a flying in the face of Providence" For the rain was now sleetier, thicker than hitherto

He silenced her with "O woman of little faith Jane, I am surprised at you The Lord now tells me that the dream was twice sent to me as an assurance of our safety. There is no danger because I know there is none. Was it my dream or yours?"

It was indeed, according to the distinction which Homer makes, no empty dream but a true vision.

The night of Sunday passed in unspeakable misery Mr. Smile was assiduous in caring for the sufferers. Towards morning, when they were hushed in the sleep of exhaustion, he also fell upon his own sleep. From this he woke at dawn exclaiming

'Jane, I have dreamed it again! For the third time the Lord has sent me the vision, as twice before, to assure us. The temple of Shiva, the *bavagh* in front of it, the river flowing over the road wide as it must be at this season, but neither deep nor dangerous"

They reached Mal Ghat, exchanging dawk and ponies, while it was still early Here they breakfasted pretty well, and were refreshed Here awaited them the groom Sitaram, a Maratha of the furthest southern type with a reddish tinge He was an elderly man of forty for in his family and clan they seldom lived many years beyond that age

Sitaram, naturally enough, was not at all well pleased It was not the two days' fasting that had upset him. He seemed to resent himself for being able to get no better service than with missionaries, and such as these. He growled when he saw Yamuna in his master's arms, for therein lay the root of the offence

With him was Moti, a shaggy white pony, short but stalwart, and not such a beast as gentlemen ride in India The children ran to him with shouts and hugs, with lumps of sugar and of white bread They also welcomed Sitaram, who was less sullen with them, and with whom they were presently in deep conference.

By this channel it gradually came out that the fat was in the fire on the other side of the Nilgiris, and pretty well throughout Kanhala State, on the subject of the abduction of Yamuna If the natives had gone about more whilst at Kanhala they would not have failed to hear of it It was well enough that

they had not ventured to call at the palace, for the bigoted Maharaja was making a personal matter of it, and they might have been arrested on the spot

It was a very big scandal indeed, as big as was the god affronted. It had gathered by accretion and by delay, by the pure cheek of the method of abduction, and by the patience of the vindictive measures Not a worshipper of Shiva in Kanhata State, in Western India, who did not hold himself personally affronted. Each felt no danger from the vengeance of the god so long as the aggressors remained unpunished The matter appealed to the worst passions of the people, threatening, as it did, remote interference with the pleasures for which the great temples were sought. Mere superstition was also shocked and frightened by what Mrs. Smiler had done.

There was no need for Premabai, little Yamuna's adopted mother, to do more than initiate proceedings. The State, the Hindu faith, unanimously took up her cause. Unquestionably an act had been committed which legally counted as criminal. To avoid any conflict of authorities, Premabai was told to keep quiet until the Smilers returned to Narol

"We have them safe, at Mahableshwar or here,' the lawyers and the priests said to her. "By the laws which the English have introduced Yamuna shall be restored to you, and her kidnapper punished If she appeals, the worst that can happen is that the Resident himself will have to sentence her She is within our toils: she cannot escape. All will be as before, and Shiva shall have his own."

Such words had been stirring and buzzing throughout Western India for two months. Faint echoes of them had reached Mrs. Fulton, but not the innocent Smilers. The native press, which every European scorns to be aware of even should it concern himself (and better so) had been full of the matter.

When a part of all this had been reported by the children, Sitaram was summoned before the master.

His speech was cut. He was thoroughly ashamed of his employers. Already in his mind he discounted Mrs. Smiler, who would not be his Madame Sahib much longer. It seemed that the state police, with some sort of warrant for his arrest and with authority to take back Yamuna, were waiting in the little bungalow at Nuroli. Apparently Mr Smiler was out of it, and not directly threatened by the law.

"Never mind, dear," he said to his wife. "What you have done I have done. I will stand by you, as the Lord will stand by us both."

She gave him a haggard glance of gratitude. The shock was so great that both were dazed by it. Both thought first of Yamuna, and of the futile effort to save her. Alternately they chummed the baby, fondling her for well nigh the last time. One of the little Smilers was too ill to care; but the other two were by no means sorry at the thought of losing Yamuna, little realising the danger to their mother.

"O my little one in Christ!" she cried in tears. "It was for that reason that I stole you, trying to do what was for the best. I wish now that I had left you with Mrs. Fulton on the hills. I thought that you must now grow up a Murali, a Shamrao woman. So few years are enough, in this evil land. That is what must happen, unless some brighter future position comes. Shiva seems to be having his own, yet the Lord is strong to save."

Sitaram could not follow the words, but he misliked the action.

"I don't hold with such doings," he said gruffly in Marathi. "Almost I fear the vengeance of my god for keeping service with those who have affronted him. I have been willing to look after the pony, and to do odd jobs below my master's

A poor man will do much for his stomach, though I am by rights a landholder. But I stop short at sacrilege. What are the missionary *log* doing in my country anyhow? They may understand what they want; I don't. But let them not interfere with the few pleasures of us village people!"

That was what missionary aggression came to in the last resort. Sitaram saw himself a decade hence if he lived (or if not he, then his son, which came to the same thing,) visiting Langam, where the Murahs danced with waving arms before the image of Mahadeo, but missing among them the fairest, as she might then be, Yamuna, dressed in a suit of heavy crimson, spangled with gold.

The Smiles were not up to preaching to him then, or putting him in his place. His position was already in some respects better than theirs, since he stood within the law of India while they stood without.

They asked him instead about the state of the road and the rivers onward to Naioli, ninety-forty miles. Though they were in good shelter at Mal Ghat they did not think of lingering there in order to delay the fate which awaited them. It was raining harder than ever on this Monday forenoon.

"What do I know of the state of the road behind me," grumbled Sitaram, "since it changes every hour? Already I have waited here two days by the Sahib's command, and this is the third day. Yet when I came through the rivers were not at all high; and the Nilganga did not wet Moti's knees."

His employers thought that they could trust his report of the road. As to his attitude, it came darkling over them that, whatever other gods any man in India, even a non-Hindu, may worship, he also worships and fears Shiva, and that they had hopelessly antagonised the sentiment of the land.

They made a fresh and more comfortable start

by noon. It greatly relieved the congestion in the tonga to have Mr. Smiler on horseback. He trotted alongside, or close behind, upon Matt, an object of incessant interest to the children. He should have been photographed as he rode in the rain, an umbrella in one hand, his long legs in dittoed trousers that clung to them, nearly scraping the ground on either side of the squat white beast. Indeed, he could kick up a pebble with his toe, and sometimes did so for the amusement of the children. Shravan was to return to Narali afoot.

Beyond Mal Ghat they left the watershed of these lower Ghats. The road wound down hill as if to help them on, and there was much pleasantness in the tepid rain. The character of the scenery rapidly changed. There was a distinctive tropical tropic here which the Deccan lacks. Palm trees began to be everywhere seen. They were in the vegetation extension of the Konkan, which was the wonderland of Malabar.

So, with changes of ponies for the tonga but none for Mr. Smiler, and with a brief stop to feed at a travellers' bungalow or two, they made the good progress of thirty miles during the long afternoon. They were getting homeward, whatever awaited them; and there would be some future after the storm. Luckily for Mrs Smiler, she had left behind her, somewhere in America, a missionary organization which approved her character and upheld her methods.

The condition of the rivers across the road was a more immediate question. These were of an entirely different system from the native natural streams which take their rise at Mahableshwar, and were some two hundred and fifty miles further south; but the same Monsoon had suddenly swollen them. The tonga was hitherto able to splash through them, with the water swirling above the

axle-trees. Mr. Smiler's trousers would have become wet enough without the rum; and he presently laid aside his umbrella as a vanity.

He left his family at the bungalow, eight miles short of Naroli, and three miles from the Nilganga, the largest stream they would have to cross.

"It is very possible that we cannot get across to-day," he said. "I will ride ahead alone and investigate. Do not stir from here until you get word from me. If we can not reach Naroli to-night it is not our fault. We have not shrunk from meeting the enemies of the Lord."

"Do not be rash, dear Elmer, in trying the stream, which may be treacherous."

"I won't. I'll keep an open mind as to whether it is safe to try it. Perhaps, as you say, the dream was sent in warning."

Moti was worn out, and took over half an hour to reach the Nilganga. Mr. Smiler passed several brown pedestrians, with their dripping loins girt up.

"Have you passed the ford of the Nilganga, *bhai* (brother)?" he asked on each occasion.

"Ho, Sahib, yes; do you not see?" they returned with false cordiality, and with little respect.

Here in the neighbourhood of Naroli he was recognised, and not liked. More than one turned and scowled after him, or shook a fist. "Ho, you would rob us of our Murahs, would you, Feringhi? Shiva will not make a meal thul of you!"

At the Nilganga light was failing. But there it was, the landscape of his dream, the setting of a tragedy. The stream was brimming, as was only natural after three or four days of such downpour. Down the river there was no such blur as Mr. Smiler remembered in his dream. All else was as he had seen it twenty times. The temple of Mahadeo at the corner, the fakir settlement before it, but within it, for shelter. In the thickening light the white-

wash and the red paint showed less vividly. He thought he recognised the holy man, not one of the most offensive, who often but not invariably sat there.

"Is the ford yet safe to ride through, bhai?" he asked. In India this address is not a personal peculiarity, but almost a form of the language. He wanted to know. He would not naturally have spoken to such an object, with white ashes pressed down upon his flattened locks.

The *bawaji*, for all his paint and ashes, had more regular features than Mr. Smiler. It was really a superior, a benevolent large countenance. The missionary remembered from his dream with a strange sensation, the long nose, the expression of calm.

"It is safe if your horse be not too tired," the holy man sang out in a voice of much resonance.

"What answer could be more honest," thought Mr Smiler, "supposing anyone could conceivably wish to mislead me? Moti is tired, and I will not force him to take the stream."

At the edge of the rapidly running water he let the pony have a good rest, though without getting off his back. Then the tall man and the short steed moved forward in agreement.

Moti waded firmly for some distance. But when the deeper water began it unnerved them both. It rose above those poor trousers to the saddle. The pony stood still, shivering, for this water was colder than the rain. His rider was so anxious, on feeling the river gushing beneath him, as to take his feet out of the saddle and to pray to support them on Moti's humble neck. They were in the deepest place, if they could have kept on. But the next moment they were apart, whirled about heads downward. The spot on the surface of the river where there had been a blow in the missionary's dream was the scene of his death struggle.

The fakir seated in the entrance to Shiva's shrine saw all without moving an eyelash or disturbing the rather fine calm of his countenance Moti's carcase usefully manured a poor farmer's field down stream Mr Smiler's body, swept out to the shark haunted sea, not many miles below, was never recovered

The sympathy which would have gone forth to Mrs Smiler amid her calamities was rather smothered by the circumstances of her arrest. Yamuna was at once restored to the retired Murali Premabai, and little Sarah Smiler died the next week

CHAPTER III

"She rose before my startled eyes—
A solemn shape was she
Like ghost out of the solid earth,
Like me out of the sea

She beckoned with her forefinger,
Her eye commanded me
"And follow me to death" she said,
"Or love — it may be"

Unpublished

It was about a month after the death of Mr Smiler, and thus in the middle of July. Dr Fulton, sat in a long chair at the entrance to the Ritualist mission bungalow in Kankala, his long legs outstretched, luxuriously reading a letter of several sheets, which had just come in from his mother

Mrs Fulton was an admirable correspondent. Under different circumstances, if her life had been otherwise filled, she might have won distinction as a writer. Yet there was nothing incomplete in her life, nothing to be regretted; and things were best as they were.

"There are various children in our compound," Fulton was reading "who still miss you I suspect that theirs is a cupboard love, like that of so many of our Christians, whom we must yet cherish just as they are. Your kind heart must be grieved, as I know it is, on account of dear Mrs. Smiler. I am not allowed to correspond with her, but she is constantly in my thoughts and prayers. I have a real respect for her, and understand her better since the hours she spent with me a month ago. The afflictions that came upon her within a week seem too terrible.

"And do you know, Eddie, the situation is now having a good effect upon Christians or Hindus in Tulsipur. Without reading the native newspapers I can tell that there is a vicious exultation throughout Western India. I feel the reverberation of this in my own work. It is not right, at least it is not desirable by all the standards which have prevailed in India hitherto, that a white woman missionary should be a prisoner in a native State for having tried to rescue a victim of Shiva. Yet justice must be done. It is of the essence of British rule in India—which perhaps has always kept too much aloof from Christianising efforts.

"I do not know what to say or think. I have contributed to the fund which has been raised for Mrs. Smiler's defence. Yet she has sinned, or at any rate she is in the wrong according to the law, which we cannot call an unjust law. My heart bleeds to think of her. Her two children have been taken to Bombay by missionaries of the Peculiar People. I don't laugh at the name. I only hope that the children, not specially nice ones, are being properly cared for. The little home at Naroli, as dear to them as this at Tulsipur is to my children, has been broken up.

"It is borne in upon me that the methods of the Peculiar People, certainly any methods of peculiar morality, do not pay. Little Yamuna was so sweet. You would have been capable of stealing her yourself; I would have given her shelter here or have helped to smuggle her out of India. Yet it might not have been right; and I certainly was not right for Mrs. Smiler to lift her as she did. We are all at one in our loathing of Shiva and of his evil works. Yet it is necessary not only to do the right thing but to do it in the right way.

"By what she has done with the best purpose, Mrs. Smiler has let us in, missionaries from one end

of India to the other. She has given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. Someone here—not the usual sort of visitor, as you may believe—was asking the other day: 'What is the very worst thing that you can say of a man? *He meant well.*' That sounds too sharp, it is not my way of expressing myself. But there is a dreadful truth in it.

"Kind, devoted Mrs Smiler has brought it about that some of the humblest of our native Christians have it in their power to ask me for news of her with the sneaking subacid smile which you know that they are quite capable of, and which I can neither answer nor reprove. I believe that in their hearts the unregenerate rascals still take a pride in the triumph of Shiva as it seems. There was something uncanny, which I have not seen rightly explained, about the drowning of poor Mr Smiler. Every native will have it that this was the direct retribution of Shiva. *In the natural*, to use an expression of his which we both dislike, I did not care for the excellent man. I am ashamed that it was so; he may have a brighter mansion in Heaven than myself. He has died for the cause; and died in such a way as to do it harm!

"I daresay that at Kanhala you see more than we do here of the ugly spirit which has been aroused among the natives. To think that within a mile of you is our friend, as we both esteem her, in bonds, evil-entreated, in frail health, a widow and deprived both of Yamuna and little Sarah! She is ready to suffer whatever more is necessary, for I know the spirit which is like a fire within her. Nothing can quench that, and I admire her for it. If she survives her imprisonment she will be battering again, but I hope with better aimed blows, at the Destroyer, at the image of Moloch, as she calls it.

"The hardest thing is that one can help Mrs. Smiler. She must follow her path to the end. I

can quite understand the missionaries at Kanhala, of either sort, standing up at first for their 'They have their families to think of, the vested interests of their work, the repute of their mission in a native State where it is so hard for Christianity to keep a footing at all So I would by no means compare them to the Pharisee and the Publican.

"Nor would I have you, dear Edith, compromise yourself by yielding to any hasty compassionate impulse. You can really do nothing to help Mrs Smiler, while you could easily hurt yourself Though you do not complain, I am aware that your connection with the Retarded Freedman's Home, by a thread. Mrs Smiler herself, who was always interested in you, would not wish you to risk the position which you still hold by any injudicious effort on her behalf

"And yet, and yet—the word, in season! If the Rowneys were still at the Kanhala Residency you might indeed have been of some effectual help. Though you are not now so intimate there you have the ear of the Acting Resident. I have heard highly of Mr Corsand from others besides you. In missionary circles he is believed to be a friend to our work. If you ask my grounds for thinking so I can only say that he is engaged to a clergyman's daughter, now on her way out. An almond deal has been made of this by some good people, who have even contemplated waylaying her in Bombay to bespeak her influence!

"The trial will be over by that time, for it takes place this week Mr. Corsand is thought to have shown his good will by bringing the case into his own court. Mrs Smiler will thus be tried by no heathen with the marks of Vishnu or of Shiva on his brow, but by an Englishman of the best traditions I do not see how he can acquit her, since she glories in her fault; but he will doubtless deal gently with

her. So for you to speak to him at all before the trial would be not only needless but a tampering with justice. You might get into the most terrible trouble for it, and ——— ."

"Heaven help me who is this? And is it your habit, my friend to stalk about silent and unannounced? I believe I remember that it is. Marthabai, upon my word!"

If the young doctor's nerves had not been good he would have screamed or jumped at the sight before him.

It was no more than a native woman, of quite unusual height, clad in the white garment that ayahs use, who stood upright before him saying not a word. She had left her thick soled slippers behind a flower pot at the corner of the few stone steps leading up to the verandah and had approached barefooted. Many natives adopt so to give one a start in this way. But it was a specialty, Fulton remembered, with the respectable person before him.

He recalled how, half a year before, in his mother's house at Tulsipur she had turned up in the same way as if out of the figured carpet of his room, with the mystic announcement: *Bolavatal, hya sayankall.* That meant that he was invited for that evening to the house of her employer, an absurd Eurasian woman called Mrs. Gow. It could never get many words out of this elderly female one of two Maratha women who lived in Mr. Gow's family and were known as his two mothers. It was not expressly known whose son he was, but there was little room for doubt that his mother was the elder and feebler sister. She had long been a Christian, under the name of Marybai.

The two dressed and looked singularly alike; and from cheap alliteration the second had for half a lifetime passed as Marthabai. Fulton had not spoken to her many times, and knew as little as

possible about her Yet he professed to prefer her to Marybai, as finding more character in her This might well have been without Marthabai having very much Yet she had enough to keep her from becoming a Christian when every apparent consideration drew her that way She remained, to the scandal of many, a consistent Hindu in the narrowly Evangelical household of her sister's son This depended chiefly upon her cooking her own food and scrupulously eating it apart from the others By this means she preserved the Maratha caste which is a considerable asset.

During most of his life Dr. Fulton had been in the way of seeing Mr Gowan's letters occasionally at Tulsipur He had watched them grow old Their existence was in the hinterland of the small household; yet they had rights independent of Mrs Gowan whom they cordially despised. Fulton was often reproved for laughing at the entire situation by his mother, who sometimes laughed herself.

Marybai must now be, he thought, about sixty. Marthabai was years younger and naturally more vigorous Yet her grey hair tended to white She had the clear complexion of the Marathas at its lightest, but flow with many furrows. With her height, her anxious straight features, her burning eyeballs, and the dust upon her feet, she presented a dignified, not to say venerable figure, with a touch of pathos about it. Reminding him as she did of his mother's home at Tulsipur he was moved at seeing her in his own place of banishment so far away.

He jumped to his feet, slipped his mother's letters into a side pocket of his jacket, and seized the old woman's hand, an act which she did not seem to appreciate

"*Bolavalat, hya sayankali?*" he shouted jovially.

She did not respond with any smile, but answered ominously:

"*Holanatal, jaldi, jaldi!*"

"Who is it that calls me in such fearful haste?"

"It will surprise you, Sahib. It is my granddaughter who summons you, Nilaba whom they would make a Murali at Lingam Betty Stuart is the name you know her by."

"BETTY STUART And she wants me?"

The shout this time rang through the abode of desolation

"There is need," said Mathabai in apology.

"And you are her grandmother you old dear? That just explains the vague boastings of the Gows about relationship"

He seemed not at all proud this lover, nor abashed at finding an ancestress of his sweetheart in an unmistakably brown woman of humble position Instead, he flung an arm about her shoulders, which was not in native manners He would even have whirled her off with him down the tattered matting of the veranda; but this was duly resisted.

"Teddie Sahib always would have his joke," she said, giving him the name by which he had grown up.

But he was more stirred than he could have believed. For he remembered no far-away summer time of bounding rapture, but simply the most romantic evening of his life, scarcely four months back. Betty Stuart in the little hotel at Lingam, so entirely charming that he had sure believed that the angels in Heaven are always fifteen years of age She must be sixteen since then?

He recalled her cruel and anomalous position, so exposed to jests and to real dangers. She was only half aware of them, innocent and determined to be good. Betty's bark was headed for the breakers even then; this must be the shipwreck. So they would make a Murali of her, a consecrated dancing girl, a bride of Shiva, even as Kamma was destined to be. The dogs! would their maws never be

Raja Ram Rao was a dul, dunk, fat Maratha of
abont twenty five of no qualities in particular.
Without the abilities and the flashy charm of his
next brother, the renowned Rao Amrit Rao he was
not accused, like the Malaraja, of having murdered there
Ram Rao, though not rich, was yet the land prince
in a kingdom which reached from the Mysore table
land to the sea He was well reputed rather than
otherwise. He had not had time to lose the early
outward genial nature of his grade Somewhat
heavily, he showed courtesies, chiefly in connection
with sport, to the Europeans in Kamhati of sufficient
standing. These therefore gave him a good word
without allowing of letting him meet their women-
folks He was understood not to be up to that
In fact he was well known to wallow in the sty not of
Epicurus

Ram Rao was taking the road of his father, the
late Malmaja, found murdered in a gutter for
lechery unpardonable even in India The youngest
son made no pretence of speaking English, though
he had been taught At he cared for was drink,
which was sapping his vitals, hunting, whereby he
retarded premature apoplexy; and the sensuality
which was not only allowed but recommended by
his religion

If Raja Ram Rao was afield after the newest, the
cinnamon-coloured recruit among the Mikalis,
sometimes discussed as scarcely throughout a State as
actresses in London other candidates had better,
and probably would, retire. He was Comus, while
Betty was comparable to the unpretented Lady.

So it was no wonder that Dr. Fulton stilled his
impetuous spirits and stood listening intently to the
situation as rather incoherently expressed by
Marthabai She stood facing inwards, at the head
of the veranda steps, while he faced outwards.
Thus he commanded not his rear, but an extensive

and pleasing prospect in front of the mission bungalow It was not raining, but the Monsoon weather, grateful after the copper glare of so many months, softened all outlines in a grey obscurity.

For the only season in the year the driving clouds were a beauty The bushes in the dilapidated garden were still dripping from the last shower. Close beyond the ground dipped in a bluff of fifty feet to the broad and turbid stream of the Krishna. Fulton could see, still beyond, the stately water steps leading up to Kanhala city, the fort, and an undulating countryside. Here there was, while it lasted, an almost English greenness, with vivid splashes of Oriental colour besides

From his six feet of height he could overlook the tall native woman. He was broad-shouldered, with the uprightness of his years, though just stooping a little to listen. He showed a comely, rather long face of regular features, a clear complexion which was olive only as a European's may be The hair was curly above the brow he had been a good-looking boy, his mother's pride on that score. But the feature of the figure which he made was the brown eyes. These, though becoming more alert perforce, were not naturally that. Instead they were kindly, with a timid, appealing glance under the long lashes even after so many of life's troubles. Edgar Fulton owed a good many of his friendships (which had never much helped him) to his eyes. At this moment they were listening, with a smile, courteously yet impatiently, to a confused tale; for he was a youthful lover.

"Dr. Fulton, who is this native woman?"

The words came sharp as a pistol shot from his right rear, on the eastern side of the veranda which ran along the front of the house. They reminded Fulton that he was not master even of that dismal domain. He had not found resting place yet for the

sole of his foot, having by nature too much of the dove in him.

The speaker was the indubitable master there. He was a pale, full-blooded man of forty, with a smooth long face, in yellow flannels of a clerical cut at the neck. There was no other sign of the priest. The reverend gentleman believed in a certain right medium, exactly attained by himself, between worldliness and rigidity. He was Fulton's master, not associate, in the impossible position into which the young man had fallen.

Ostensibly, his yoke was easy. While set like flint against Fulton's continued connection with the Ritualist Mission, he gave little sign of this. He cultivated a second intimacy from which it was not often worth while departing. His whole manner was that of the tame cat in another man's house, of the priest desirous of making himself familiar in order that he might pursue his own purposes. In this case the purposes were innocent, being incessant games and dinners in Club society; yet they had corrupted his character. His voice, usually of such sweetness as to arouse distrust, could become vinegary and vicious, as now.

It was about ten in the morning. The perfunctory daily service in the little chapel to the west of the bungalow had been over for an hour. The priest had been somehow delayed in making the inquisitorial inspection of the slushy premises which followed. He did not often interfere. It was too much trouble, and he thought that he was not narrow-minded. But priests who are liable to be bullied or scorned by bishops like occasionally to pull about their own dependants. As they have taught the world, authority dearly loves authority.

"You do not answer me, Dr. Fulton. Who is this native woman whom you have brought upon my veranda? You were making enough noise over

her a few minutes ago to wake the seven sleepers."

This was undeniable. The priest had heard the momentary uproar from the native lines at the back of the bungalow. He had also heard the name which Fulton shouted.

"This," said Fulton, "is Marthabai, an inmate in the house of people whom I have known most of my life. I have sometimes seen her in my mother's house and chapel."

It was an awkward prolegomenon. He could not quite say, "This is the fine old grandmother of the sweetest girl I know." Besides, the little that he thought he knew of Marthabai was vanishing, while her character assumed new forms. He was ashamed to mention people like the Gows, with whom he had never held.

Marthabai, seeing that the discussion in English was about her unimportant self, bent forward and salaamed, respectfully yet not too humbly, preserving the pride of the Maratha. She was manifestly weary, and her white hair showed when she stooped. A man with decent human feelings would have felt for the poor old soul, so manifestly trying to do the right thing in a strange house, and not to make trouble among its inmates. No social standards on the part of Europeans, half or whole, could have surprised her who had dwelt for half a lifetime with the Gows in Queer Street.

This priest took no sort of notice of the effort to propitiate—an unthinkable rudeness in a land where a Maharaja will kindly say "Salaam, *bhai*," and mean it, to a boatman or a beggar. "Even such," thought Fulton, whose feelings were rising, "have been all my efforts during half a year to win bare tolerance among these priests. This is the end."

"I suppose this is one of the Christians from Tulsipur?" snarled the reverend gentleman. "I warned you from the first that your mother's

connections would do you harm. Your servant Daniel is an example."

"You can leave my mother and my servant alone. This woman is not even a Christian."

"I am glad of that considering the ground on which she has come. The veranda of the mission house is no place for her. Send her away."

"Indeed I will not, Padre, until I have concluded certain important affairs with her."

"Important they may be to you but to no one else; and to me they seem indecent. It is not for such affairs that you are being supported upon mission premises."

"Kicking my heels and forbidden to practise my profession thanks for nothing. Come, Marthabai, since the Padre Sahib forbids us the veranda, we will go to my own rooms."

'Dr Fulton, you take her there at your own risk. Such a thing has never happened in this bungalow before.'

"Pah! Such a thing as taking an old woman to one's apartment? Get out, with your impure ideas!"

A light seemed to break upon his mind, as shown by the crooked smile at one side of his mouth.

"You are more likely to get out yourself, Dr. Fulton. Yet, though your words are highly improper, I will try to be just. It is quite possible that you do not understand me. Now what do you suppose to be my motive in forbidding this woman the premises?"

"The mania of certain missionaries, of every sort of creed, about females setting foot upon bachelor premises."

"I see. I thought as much. Learn, young man, at the end of our unsought connection, that I go in, not for mamas, but for moderation. I am aware that there are those, even within the Ritualist

Mission, who honestly cherish the mania you mention Others, like myself, are more men of the world, *in all things that are right. It may be that you* really misconceived me, though I doubt it. Anyhow, I have been candid. It is not on any such general grounds that I forbid this woman the house."

"Then on what grounds, in the Devil's name? Are you mad or am I mad?"

"On very specific grounds You must be mad, to talk like this."

Yet had he heard Residents and others of his betters swear, however they might seek to muffle their speech from conventional respect for his cloth. He made a practice of reproving profanity whenever he could do so without damaging his social chances.

"For God's sake speak out, if any one of your cries can once be direct."

"Can you mean what you say? No, it is not possible. I am trying to be fair to you, Dr. Fulton. But I know what I know because I know it. *I heard you.* I heard the name which you shouted just now."

"It was reckless of me; but what if you did?" Fulton made shift to reply. "You could not hear a more honourable name"

But he was blushing like a girl He was ill fitted to be a conspirator, a thing he did not desire, though it might be useful in this quest. Almost as little fitted was he to be a knight-errant, a rescuer in the East. He had not enough devil in him. The native Christians at Tulsipur used to speak of him in childhood as *bhola* It is a kindly, slightly apologetic word, meaning simple in a pleasant sense, with a liability to be imposed upon. If he had not been that he would never have found himself in his present surroundings. So he was hardly qualified to pity another's simplicity. The ideal in India is

the opposite, the German one of craft as strength. Strange to say, certain missionaries have been admired by natives for being so *khol* or deep, outdoing themselves in slimness.

"Dare you say that of a temple girl? You blush as you speak, Dr Fulton: you cannot face it out. For the name was Betty Stuart!'

"Is it familiar to you?"

"Is it not? The Eurasian Murali at Lingam! We have reason to know that you began an intrigue with her when you were at Lingam (most improperly, and without permission) last March. Now comes this woman with a summons to you from her. It is done openly, as such things are in the East. And they represent all that missionaries of every colour must struggle against, from ourselves to your friend Mrs. Smiler, whose trial is going on in the Residency grounds at this moment."

Fulton gave a start at being reminded of a fact which was common knowledge in Kanhula, but which had been pushed into the background of his mind. He was also wondering how much of the priest's knowledge had been eked out, askew, by deliberate listening. He was not long in doubt.

"So I need not be what you call a dragon of propriety, as I am not, to oppose tooth and nail the prosecution of such an intrigue upon mission premises. Betty Stuart summons you urgently to Lingam, does she not? And you propose to go to her, do you not? Very well, your departure on such an errand ends of itself the association between us. And this woman, who must not stand here another minute, — the go-between?"

"She is Betty Stuart's grandmother," said Fulton, weakly.

The reverend gentleman stared hard at Murthabai, looking her up and down.

"She may be, but not because she says so. And,

if so, she is quite capable of coming on such an errand, in this country."

"A respectable Maratha woman, who has always kept her caste."

"That is Betty Stuart's lineage, exactly."

"Why, what do you know about it?"

"More than you, possibly, young man, including *things which you would give your ears to learn*"

"Tell me, for God's sake, anything you can."

"If I could only be sure that you ask in good faith. But you are so evidently infatuated with a bride of Shiva, a Murali is"

"She is not But go on."

"You show your infatuation, though I do not say that you have sinned"

"You'd better not, Padre, about the girl I love"

"There you are again, quite uncontrolled, to speak moderately, as I always do"

"There's no mistake about it, Betty Stuart is the girl for my money."

"I feared as much, Dr. Fulton In a mission house, of a temple girl!"

"Don't take me up like that! One can trust you to give the nastiest meaning to anything But what were you going to tell me about her?"

"I am not sure that I ought to tell you anything," said the priest, growing suspicious "Yet anybody who has been in Kamala off and on during fifteen years knows what I do Society here changes pretty thoroughly every eighteen months or so, and it isn't the officials who can inform you of the past of the place. I was the youngest of missionaries when Major Bertrand Stuart startled the station by taking up openly with a Maratha dancing girl. I can tell you, it settled *his* hash, socially I never saw her; how should I? At a later period the Paynes, of our, I mean my, mission, interested themselves in the daughter of the marriage or connection, whatever

it was. Betty Stuart was baptised by Canon Payne, though her mother has taken her back to Hinduism at its worst Stuart commanded the Maharaja's forces, doing some good work under the title of Senapati or General Everything he tried to do, for the State or for his daughter, fell to pieces at his death. I don't know why I am telling you all this."

"You have told me nothing new so far Did not General Stuart leave extensive properties?"

"So that is the way the wind blows, is it? You would feather your own nest under the name of honourable love? To me the one possibility is as base as the other. You shall get no furtherance from me, nor conduct this intrigue from my premises. I have heard before of your unholy interest in the Stuart jaghirs I trust they have been reassumed by the State, or are otherwise out of the reach of adventurers seeking a settlement. Dr. Fulton, I am ashamed of you The Betty Stuart whom you are after, for one purpose or another, is notorious as the white Murah of Lingam. She has long been the favourite of the Raja Ram Rao, one of the grossest libertines in India"

"Shut up, Padre! You have said too much, though I did set you a-going. It would take a surgical operation to get into your head any idea of the innocence and the dangers of Betty Stuart. On the whole, I think that she and I are better without your good opinion!"

When this Padre sneered, as now, showing his large teeth and still further elongating his proboscis, he was not a pleasant sight. No wonder he seemed to frighten poor old Marthabai, who had patiently stood by during this painful scene which she could not follow in detail

"Come, mother," said Fulton, laying a hand upon her shoulders. "I have much to hear from you; and you are weary."

And he pushed her gently towards his apartment on the west.

"If you take her in there, you are no longer even a nominal associate of ours"

But the reverend gentleman did not set himself across their path

"It has been a sad connection, like a page in a copybook, blurred and written all amiss It was the greatest blunder of my life, and I have made several. It cost the last few hundred pounds of my mother's savings Worse than that, it nearly cost me my self-respect which I am now recovering. Yet it is not altogether for you to say when this connection ceases I deal not with you, 'Padre, but with your masters.'

"I will write to the Bishop this noon; I will telegraph to him!"

"It might help you to do so accurately if you knew the character sketch of yourself which he gave me at our first meeting I have often thought of it."

His Lordship," said the priest, turning a brick-red under his healthy tan, "may have his airy, fairy ways when he takes his diversions at home. But on the spot he always supports authority."

"I have heard that before, and seen it I am not likely to be a subject of controversy among you any longer. I plan to leave your premises, as you love to call them, very shortly But I mean to do so at my convenience, not at yours I have a right to another half year of shelter and of wages, which I am giving up. But don't you try to hustle me as I am leaving, whether to-day, or to-morrow, or next week!"

Fulton held his head higher as he spoke these words, and looked a handsome fellow. He would wait no longer for the blossoming of spiritual qualities which were not in him, and without which the clergy professed that he must not practise

medicine under their auspices It had been an impossible position from the first It would have crushed him but for some youthful elasticity, and the one clearing in which it had brought him of the meeting with Betty How far away the clerics already seemed to him, whether the top Bishop or the undereducated missionaries at whom his Lordship delicately jested!

It was time to turn the stale page. Before following the new adventure which beckoned him, Fulton was glad to fling off a hampering and dishonouring connection Yet he had given up something. He was now without a *dhanda*, a trade. He was now one of the unemployed who can never be quite respectable in India

At the end of the veranda he left the Padre, who was still sneering. "He is off to Lingam," reflected the clergyman. "But first he will have to see Mr Coryand. I wonder what that Witch of Endor has to say now."

Fulton had conducted her into his bleak apartment, which might have been so pleasant, consisting of a number of small rooms. First he passed, unconsciously almost for the last time, through the anteroom, with its wide shelves of mission books, not one of which permitted itself to be read. In the bathroom beyond he seated himself, and bade Marthabai sit cross-legged on the floor; there would have been no use in offering her a chair

They sat in the outer doorway of the room, where this opened upon a little enclosed side veranda, too much darkened by trellis work over which grew morning glories and other climbing plants Their position was opposite the folding doors, kept locked on the further side, which led into the priest's bedroom. Beyond Fulton's bedroom was a dressing-room and then the indispensible Indian bathroom But there was no tidiness Earthen walls and floors were crumbling, the mattings gaped, the dust

lay thick in corners and upon the curtains Fulton had possibly rescued his servant Daniel from one or two obvious vices, but he had not taught him—it was not his place to teach him—to light a candle to sweep by. Everywhere was the degradation of a house in India without a Madam Sahib.

The wrong place, in which he had been deservedly unhappy during a squalid half-year. Had he listened to a voice in his heart which whispered "Not here!" or "The wrong turning, the wrong man!" at sundry times, he would not have stumbled into such courses. No matter, he was cutting his losses and coming out into a larger atmosphere, where "Love sometimes whispered in the wind."

Some would have thought it a questionable improvement in his prospects certainly a derogation from his birthright of race This old native woman who sat on the floor before him, dazed or dully patient until told to proceed, he must have been badly infatuated to wish to become her grandchild Yet she had a human tale to unfold. Hers too was a sacred personality. Something was burning in her heart. She had not sinned against her queer conventions by seeking him thus for nothing.

There was so little that Fulton could do for his visitor. He could not even offer her the food which she seemed to need, for it had been the pride of her life to abstain from this in Christian company Maratha caste is a swagger thing, and not to be reasoned about. It is the sole consolation of many a desolate existence the complacency of "nothing unclean"

Marthabai had not even the ground in common with one which a native Christian has Here, to use the word which some object to, though it has its meaning, was a heathen. A good heathen, he could not help feeling, in contrast to the bad heathen with whom he was rushing into conflict. She brought

him an appeal from his true love; right and not wrong motives had led her to him.

"Mother," said Fulton, "you had better begin again at the beginning. Perhaps we will keep things clearer if I ask you certain questions. It strikes me that I do not yet know your honoured rightful name."

Shantibai Kukday, it appeared was her name by birth. Her husband, long since an inhabitant of Heaven, had been Balwant Gaikwad. Both families were Marathas of the Kunbi neighbourhood nothing if not respectable; hard hitten, rapacious for gain rather than skilled to procure it, fanatical on any point of religion or of race. It did not interfere with these pretensions that the sisters were so poor they had to take service, a thing rarely done by Maratha women, as ayahs in European households. This was thirty forty years ago, when both were young widows, Marthabai with a baby girl named Venu, but Marybai childless. Their husbands families should rightly have supported them but had not the means.

Maryba was seduced, or the other way, by a Chota Collector Sahib, in neighbouring British territory: hence Mr. Gow. It was at a later period, Fulton could vaguely make out, that the younger sister took service; nor did she long need to continue in it. Mr Gow's mother was entitled to lifelong support at the hands of the incomparable Civil Service. Where things were done with that generosity a sister was easily shuffled into the arrangement. Marthabai with little Venu, approachly half a dozen years younger than the future Mr. Gow, took up her dwelling wherever Marybai with her small pension happened to be. It was the line of least resistance, to which she had not proved superior.

But the sister who had not been seduced cherished

a consciousness of greater virtue than her elder sister who had been It was a part of the same self-respect, which had never been broken down, which prevented her from becoming a Christian, though that would have been the easier thing to do. She did justice to the relatives who had supported her.

"Gow Sahib, who is my nephew, and therefore no Sahib, has been a good son to me most of the days of his life. But he never had the looks of his cousin, my baby Venu How long ago was this, do you ask? Who am I, an old Maratha woman, to remember years and months? I do not even know my own age, Shiva be praised, since it would bring bad luck."

This, all that was in the golden
In long ago.

Marthabai seemed only to grudge spending her breath upon these earlier happenings. She wanted to get to her grandchild Betty and the present danger. But Fulton was determined, while he had the chance, to have the family history set forth in its rightful order. He took in with some surprise the fact that here was a worshipper, if not a votary, of the same deity from whom she thought to save her granddaughter.

"I heard you mention Mahadeo just now Do you believe in him?"

Her hands went up in devotion to her forehead which only lacked the sacred paint.

"How should I not believe in the greatest of the gods, the master of birth and of death? Is there anyone who does not believe in him? Even the Sahib believes in Shiva, though unwillingly; and his sainted mother, though she calls him by another name!"

Fulton had often grinned at such baffling, blarneying speeches when addressed to missionaries.

"You are trying, my good Marthabai, to save Betty Stuart from being a bride of Shiva?"

"That is why I am sitting here, having sought your protection."

"Yet you dedicated her mother Vennbai, your own child to the god?"

"That I did; and I will tell you how it was. It was not my fault, as the Sahib's face seems to say, but an act of faith, and done to save Venu's life.'

"I never did specially want a woman to be consistent: so tell away."

"Listen, Sahib, and tell me if it is in your heart to blame me. I spoke just now of the beauty of my Venu. It is a habit I have got into, living with Europeans, or those who ape them. But among our own people no mother will speak of or admit the beauty of her child, fearing envy and the evil eye. You have heard them put it off many a time when you have noticed a child: 'But, he is a duckass, a pig, a deformed one or deaf.' Yet every mother wishes to have lovely children. In her heart she is proud of them; it cannot be otherwise. But it must not be spoken of, or it will draw down bad luck."

Marthabai sighed at recalling things long past. Her thought was not unlike:

> The angels are happy in heaven,
> Went envying her and me

"My Venu was a wonder of a baby," she continued. "The Munah Yamma who is being exhibited in the Resident Sahib's court to-day isn't a patch on her. For Venu had darker eyes, even then full of fire, plumper limbs, and more vigour. I do not say that she was fairer; all our people do not care for an approach to the washed-out complexions of Europeans, begging the Sahib's pardon. My Venu used nearly to jump out of my arms, so that I

feared injury to her, her spirit was so high. I could pass nowhere without mothers, and men too, turning to look at her. It made me proud, yet that which I dreaded came upon me. When Venu was perhaps three or four she lay across my knees dying of the fever I am not superstitious like some, but the evil eye had undoubtedly been cast upon her."

"Despair was in my heart. Though this was but a girl-child, she was all I had. Her beauty was wasted, her little legs and arms were bones, her eyes well nigh quenched. 'Let her live," thought I, 'even though not to me, and at the cost of our parting.'

"'O Shiva,' I cried, 'strong Rudra the Destroyer, hear my vow This child would have been precious unto me to keep Instead, take her from me, but let her live! Accept my Venu for one of Thy countless blessed brides. If she recovers, behold I will place her after some years among the Muralls at Lingam'

"Mahadeo heard me," and her head reverently drooped. "In the night Venu's fever departed from her, and she has never been subject to *hiw-tap* since then. Within a few weeks she was plumper and more handsome than before. But I looked upon her now with changed eyes. She did not belong to me but to the God. It may be that I was wrong in making the vow which saved her life. I do not justify myself if the Sahib wishes to blame me"

"Not I!" cried Fulton, moved by the humility of her attitude. "Then Betty Stuart's mother was a full-blown Murali from the beginning? I was not sure."

"She was dedicated as you have heard A very few years later, at the earliest possible age, I took her to Lingam and left her there She seemed to be born to the profession, in which she prospered exceedingly. Shiva of the six arms, with the trident

and the sword protected her and gave her favour with his worshippers."

It was the profession of wielding men's senses and pockets, the oldest on earth. It was hard to think then that Venubai could have followed any other. The mother shook her head as she proudly recalled her child's unholy triumphs. The point was that these were not unholy, but all in the line of the original vow and in the interests of religion. For the Hindu morality was purely reversed, as Martiabai darkly argued.

"Such are the ways of our people. What was virtue for me was not virtue for Venu after I dedicated her. I have been so proud of keeping my *abru*, repute, as my sister did not. But Venu's *abru* consisted in doing just those things which would have been most wicked for married women. She was married to the God, and her duty consisted in pleasing his worshippers. And she did this with such a swing and success!"

At every period, for those who give thought to such things, there is some predominant dancing girl in every portion of India. Twenty years before, as Fulton had gathered from other sources, Venubai had been at the top of her profession in Kanhala State and even for a moderate distance round about. All this was at an incredibly early age. She was by no means tied to Lingam, but held a wandering commission. Europeans who patronise fair sisters often do not dream that these owe allegiance to some such temple, go which their earnings largely go.

But wherever she wandered, whatever she did, Venubai kept her caste and served only the worshippers of Shiva until she met Bertrand Stuart, the Senapati Sahib, commanding the Maharaja's Lamshackle forces. He was a derelict of a good Scotch family, at least he made himself so by what followed. To some degree he swept Venubai off her feet, as she

him. For his sake she gave up her profession, her caste, her religion. This was what her mother at the time could not forgive in her. The immoralities were sanctioned, consecrated. But the abandonment of her public life must draw upon her the anger of the God, as it was a going back upon her mother's vow To give up religion and her good Maratha caste could only have been acts of judicial madness.

The people of India, while they will tolerate casual connections of Europeans with their womenfolks, never care to have such things done too seriously or openly. Europeans may be said to feel reciprocally. So the Stuarts exposed themselves to the fire from both camps. Public opinion sternly condemned them when Venubai became a Christian of some weird sort, married her husband so legally as to be entitled to the pension of a major's widow, and actually settled down and made him a good wife in Kanhala during a dozen years. Such was the setting of Betty Stuart's childhood. It was a happy one, well instructed by her father and by Miss Walpole, the governess of the little Ranis.

That the Murali Venubai had it in her to play this part speaks for the versatility of Indian womanhood. Such things have often happened, but are apt to be followed by a reaction more or less violent. Fulton had heard, from Betty and from others, of this home life, of which he wished to know much more. But it was not Marthabai who could inform him.

"And you actually quarrelled with your daughter, old donkey, for the best action of her life?"

"I did, Sahib, it was my fate, God forgive me if I was wrong"

"I suppose it was your self-will."

"I was obstinate, truly. I could not bear to see my vow thwarted. Besides I was frightened to the marrow of my bones, afraid of the vengeance of Shiva."

"So, as one result, I gather that during much of your life you have been near to a pot of gold while remaining as poor as a church mouse."

"If the Sahib means that I shall die a poor woman, as I have lived, it is true," she said, fixing him with her large bright eyes. She seemed to take a foolish pride in the fact which had constituted her unrighteousness.

"General Stuart Sahib," she continued, "was a good man, though I never set eyes on him. He often sent me messages to come and live in his household, where I might have been a comfort to my daughter, where an extra mouth would not be minded, and where my caste would be respected. Sahib, why did I not go? I was angry, feeling that it was a come-down for my daughter to marry a European, no matter of what grade. The Senapati Sahib was rich. He had money in pots, as you say, and money in banks, jaghirs and inams from the kingdoms which he served. All this was now gone to Betty, though her mother has control of it, and the priests seek to resume it. It is not about that that I have come to you."

"No; I know it is not."

Bertand Stuart had had a fair spell of married happiness, longer than very many have. After the storms of his earlier career he lived for something over a dozen years in great contentment with the dancing girl reformed. Glimpses which Betty had given him showed Fulton that her's must have been in many respects a wholesome home, of good formative influences. But tragically too short a time it seemed to have lasted when Stuart suddenly died—

Diu, res si qua diu mortalibus ulla est

It cannot be too often repeated that, however well such an arrangement may suit the two, it is not apt to suit the third party, the child. Brian Houghton Hodgson, the great early Resident in Nepal, shipped

his Eurasian children off to a sister in Holland, where they died. Bertrand Stuart, had he lived longer, would perhaps have made some such plan for Betty; or perhaps he was too much in love with her mother ever to have done so

Vembai, or Mrs. Stuart as she had every right to be called, had played two parts with eminent success. In her teens she had been what a French writer complains there is no equivalent for in English life or speech, *une grande courtisane*. Later she had been a cherished wife and tender mother. But, when the cable which held her to these moorings snapped, she swung around, not altogether incalculably. In the early thirties she became a devotee, a zealot, only anxious to reconcile herself with the God whom she had cheated of her best years. Hindu life is in theory divided into such sections, with differing duties, culminating in religion. Vembai showed once more how the devotee is more inhuman, more difficult and unreasonable, than the voluptuary.

With independent and even large means she took up her dwelling in a little bungalow on the sacred soil of Lingam She had to buy permission to do so, since the priests had long ago scented their prey. With great expense and trouble, with childish and degrading ceremonies, she got herself and Betty admitted into the outer precincts of Hinduism. It was a sort of Court of the Gentiles only. Further than this Vembai could not readily go Things were made specially hard for her because of her wealth. She could not recover her lost caste and secure any caste at all for Betty, she could not complete the saving of her soul, without effectually bringing over Betty and her fortune to the God.

At Lingam, Betty Stuart had lived for some four years, from twelve to sixteen, blossoming into such charm as could make Fulton forget her origin and

her surroundings The priests had been content to go slowly, with a weather eye upon the law, and feeling sure of their prey but now, in that climate, the initiatory ceremonies of the marriage to Shiva could no longer be delayed Betty, at her age, would have to dedicate herself, her mother could not do it for her. But Venubai could and must bring her to the point.

It was a notorious if pitiful situation Officials whose business it was to know insisted, as Fulton was aware, that it was beyond their competence to interfere As long as formalities were observed the sacrifice must proceed to its conclusion as ruthlessly as that in Aulis.

Marthabai, from a gentle distance, had followed some of these happenings. He heart moved her to look again after nearly a score of years upon her daughter's face, and to see for the first time her daughter's child. She went by train from Bombay to Kanhan, thence in a bullock-cart the sixty odd miles to Langam. She came without prepossessions, with an open mind She abode in her daughter's house where it was she who had to guard her Maratha caste. As the result of what she saw and heard she had walked back the distance from Lingam in four days, bringing the message to Betty's lover.

"Come, Sahib," said Marthabai impressively, although from the floor. "Do what you can to rescue and marry my daughter. There is no time to be lost. She calls you *jalda, jalda*, being in an extremity, and remembering how you told her to send for you at such a time. Therefore it is not immodest of her, who thus makes her Swayamvara, her choice of a husband, like Damayanti."

"God forbid!" said Fulton. "I only wish I were a stronger champion! At present I am an auxiliary in the air, having lost even the service I had."

"So be it, Sahib. I know that you are not a Collector or a Resident Sahib. Nevertheless, to whom else can we go?"

"To none who loves her so truly as I do. She is very beautiful, is she not, mother?"

"She is so of a truth. Yet do I not find her to equal my Venu, at the same age. She is much fairer than her mother, being less brown than any of our people, yet not white like yours."

"I remember. Cinnamon I call that," and the old woman gravely assented.

"And the Cinnamon Girl is the girl for my money!" sang out Fulton, who was bursting and bubbling with his first poem.

"You may well ask me," Marthabai spoke out with deliberation, "why, having made one Mukti, I now help to prevent the making of another. It may be that I have lived too long among the Christians, and am no longer a good Hindu. None the less I have tried on both occasions to do what seemed the right thing to do. The characters of the mother and of the daughter are not the same. Venu rushed upon her fate joyfully, she was of those who make Muralis of themselves. I did not force her will. I would not have done that—and yet I know not—in order to keep the vow! But Venu is forcing Betty, who weeps all day and cannot bear the idea of being Shiva's bride. In this case there is no vow which must be kept at all costs. There is only Venu's self-will, her spiritual ambition, her determination to get back her caste. I like not women to be such zealots for any faith."

"Shabash! mother, I knew not you were such a reasoner. You are a good old sort, even if a little muddled; and I'm infinitely obliged to you."

"Then there are the Brahmins who press upon Venu, who annoy and frighten her and lead her by the nose. Like many of our Maratha folk, I do not

love the Brahmins. They may be necessary in the temple ceremonies but let them keep out of our families There is one Hari Pant in particular who makes my flesh creep with the cold glitter of his grey eyes. A grey eyed Indian is to me as unnatural as a blue-eyed baboo. Hari Pant is skilled in all the wisdom of the Yogis. He can sit in the air and remain for a good while under water. He controls my daughter and my granddaughter more than is respectable. I know it is not for lust, but for the money The other thing is applied by the Raja Ram Rao Who am I to talk against princes? Yet I wish not this one to have the naming of Betty Stuart I have told you how the wedding ceremony is all planned, and the Raja is to personate the God when the poor child has been put to bed in the temple. I care not for such things though they make a part of my religion. So when the poor lamb said to me, 'Apaha,' she said ."

Interesting as was the theme, Fulton had been for some minutes more concerned with the door that led into the next bedroom It seemed to prove his ideas about the slyness of priests He had long more than suspected this one of spying and listening there. At this moment he felt conviction. Surely there was the eye of the reverend gentleman on the further side of the large crack Fulton felt certain that the forehead must be pressed against the woodwork above,

"Go on, mother," he said, "I'm listening"

So he was, but he was also opening a slit the size of his fist which served to keep open the verandah door by which he was sitting. It was a crude contrivance, suited to the dwelling. Fulton stooped imperceptibly to the floor until he had the stone in his hand which was hidden from observation He never had so much pleasure in taking furtive aim. Then he let fly.

There was a thunderous crash upon the rickety woodwork, which bears an unexplained indentation to this day. More than the door seemed to speak, for a groan and a strangled oath were also heard.

CHAPTER IV

> This fellow is well read in poetry,
> And hath a lofty and pure spirit
> *Edward III.*

When Muthabai had been hustled out of the house, as seemed advisable under the circumstances, with her shoes duly collected from the flower pot by the front veranda, and a bank note or two forced upon her to help her on her way back to Bombay, Dr. Fulton summoned Daniel.

This was his reformed servant, of whom some jest was made in the station. Nothing could make Daniel Abdurahman really smart. But he had a momentary semblance of smartness as he came running at the call; he was apt to stumble when he ran. He knew that things were happening, and curiosity gave life to the fade eyes, with their smile of pathetic fallacy, and the sunken cheeks. He was spotless in his raiment of white, with red facings, and the succinct red turban upon his shaven head, in which he took a pride.

"'Did Sahib call?'"

"So it seems, since you are out of breath. The hour of destiny has struck, Daniel. There is much to do and to tell."

"I am ready to hear, Sahib."

"Trust you, and your countrymen, for that! Will you be as ready to act?"

A cloud fell over Daniel's beaming face at this aspersion.

"Try me and see, Sahib. I have ever awaited

a chance to make you not sorry for your benefactions to me."

"I have lost my *dhanda*, Daniel I have given up this *nowkari*, such as it was, and no longer have the shelter even of this roof."

He glanced comically, ruefully, at the rafters of the bedroom and the little veranda, which need not have been unhomely had they been less grimy and cob-webbed Daniel's face grew a shade more gloomy, for he was now in the service of the unemployed.

"Never mind, Sahib," he said bravely. "The Sahib is a good Doctor Sahib, and will not fail to find other service"

"I am not so sure of that, Daniel. Two or three slips, at the critical turnings of our youth, may leave a man high and dry for the rest of his days"

"May our new service at least be with better men than these Who were their mothers, in *Vilayat*? They are no Sahibs, though their faces be white"

He was inspecting with interest the stone, out of place upon the matting, and the battered door. Gravely he picked up the stone and put it where it belonged

"Might I have had the flinging of it!" Daniel declared. "Yet the Sahib's arm is the stronger. By the way," with an air of detachment, "the Padre Sahib is lying upon his bed at this hour, and I declare I hear him groan."

"Should you hear him later complaining of contusions, you know where the arnica water is. It would be a satisfaction to be of so much professional use in Kanhala."

Daniel gave a wan smile, as of one who understands things.

"I suppose we shall be returning to Tulsipur, Sahib?"

"Not this time, Daniel, or not yet. We have

como bac c upon our Mad un Sa ib's hands too often as it is "

"That is true, Sahib"

He had private reasons for not wishing to leave Kanhaka State as yet.

' It is in another direction that duty calls and adventure beckons."

"Whae the Sáhib pleases

"Into the jungle of the south east, skirting Dayabai's neighbourhood, but not turning aside to it."

"If the Sahib would do it allow me to visit Halwach ! "

"Not so, for I may have need of you. I let you stay there once before, and uncommonly good use you made of your innings You shall have time yet to complete your courtship. I declare, you will no longer need service, with a rich wife as well pretty What does reputation matter, since, as you say, you are not particular about that ? Puli cakes and wheat bread assured for the rest of your days are more to the point "

"They are indeed, Sahib, for one whose stomach has often cried out for them."

As he spoke he smoothed out the folds of cloth above his belly, not as yet expansive. 'A nondescript like Daniel thoroughly enjoyed such chaffing, which would have been intolerable, and easily the cause of murder, to a rightful Hindu, and still more a Moslem."

"Daybai is a charming girl, and so is her baby, Ruby. But it is not to go counting them that I am carrying you off. Your job can wait, but mine can't."

"The Sahib has not yet told his poor servant where we are going "

"Exactly. I distrust that weakly gabbling tongue of yours." Daniel's face, lately beaming,

again grew sober. "Yet perhaps my destination is already being discussed throughout the compound, wherever men squat on their heels over their little fires of twigs or cow dung, awaiting dinner. You are a funny race of beings, and I wonder that I still like you. I must tell, since a *dak* will have to be laid You must look spry about it "

"It will be easier to be spry when I know in which direction the horses must be sent Sahib."

"True, Daniel, if not specially polite Lingam is the place"

A great glad smile overspread the worn features, like sunlight upon a watery cloud. Perhaps Daniel rejoiced at the confirmation of what he already thought He was going, anyhow, in the general direction of Dayabai He could not resist a wonderful joke.

"Is the Doctor Sahib, by chance, going to set up practice among the Murahs of Lingam?"

Fulton laughed aloud, knowing that it was wrong to indulge his servant thus It was one of the penalties of having grown up with Daniel at Tulsipur, that they could not cease to be familiar However, Daniel's manners were vastly improved of late months He no longer dared, for his life, to address his master in the prayer-meeting tone; and other things were tolerable.

"I had not thought of it, Daniel; but I might do worse. However, it would take a Hindu, and a graduate of the Grant Medical College to make a success of it. I don't doubt there are such in Lingam."

Fulton's profession had no very great hold upon him. It had hardly, as yet, tinged his character. Their profession is a part of the character of those likely to excel in it It is thought to be dishonest if a clergyman has not been largely formed by his calling. But Fulton was several things quite as

much as a doctor. At this moment he was most of all the ardent youthful lover

"To think that all my life I have wanted to visit Lingam," Dane rambled on in epoch-making, "yet would not go when I might stay on at Hulwadi. Yet now is the journey welcome!"

It was to him, as to any native, a considerable lark. Lingam was as famous a city of pleasure as Corinth, and for very much the same reasons; yet not all were born to get there.

"Listen now to orders," said Tulloch. "First of all I want a tonga from the bazar at once to take me to the camp. Yes, my friend since I must explain things to you, I would like to see the end of Smiler Madam Sahib's trial. Don't you wish you could go with me? But you have other things to do; nor would I care for the effect of it upon your mind. Let me see you run out now, without any sort of remark, to send Maruti to the bazar for that tonga, *jalde*. No, I the pol wish my own dog-cart and Shaitan, who will have enough to do later on."

"Maruti has gone for the tonga, Sahib," Daniel was able to report a few minutes later.

"That is right. While I am gone you will get this rubbish together, ready to move at short notice. But the important thing is to have the dak laid to Lingam, sixty odd miles. Lose no time in arranging with Framji Parsi. Two of his best horses must be sent out at once along the Lingam road, one of them to the thirty-mile stage, where the country track begins, and the other fifteen miles further. Horses, not ponies remember, and suited to the height of the dog-cart. Yes, I know how bad the second half of the road is and how much Framji will make of it. If the wheels of my cart can stand the mud I think his horses' legs can. Don't let yourself be imposed upon. When I return from the camp you must have a pukka bandobast to report to me

Don't stand there shifting from foot to foot, but say that you understand, and be off."

"I understand, Sahib. When is our departure?"

"You and I and Maruti will leave, with no luggage to speak of, at any time which suits me after midnight The horses must be awaiting me along the second half of the road to-morrow, sufficiently rested"

Daniel had learned, since his reformation, to attend when orders were being given, and not to discuss them, at least until afterwards. He felt the executive pride of a head servant, even among two or three It is found best in India to handle the others through one, who is held solely responsible There is a special form of the verb in Indian languages called the causative, which expresses what is largely the duty of the white man, to bring things about while sitting in his chair For Fulton to go needlessly on such errands would have shown the same sort of small-mindedness that a home Englishman shows by meddling with the details of housekeeping. He would have been more impatient of them than ever at this moment, when Betty was calling, calling!

So Daniel shambled off to the duties for which he was fitted, enjoying the asserting of himself which was entailed Maruti was an unenlightened Maratha, an insignificant fellow, with nothing to be proud of save his caste, who hated receiving orders from such a nondescript Never mind, his fate drove him to it. Maruti scorned both his master and the head servant; he would not go beyond his conscience in obeying them

Dr Fulton had been obliged to set up Maruti when his friend General Rowney, whom he had helped to die (he could no more) some months before had bequeathed him the dog cart and Shaitan, the most modest of several equipages which would

have to be disposed of. The cart was presumptuously high for a missionary the horse improperly voracious and black and Satanic, if not young. Trouble would have been made about Fulton keeping them had not his Padre been possessed of a somewhat similar outfit less smart which had been given him years before by a retiring Civilian; only missionaries seem to be in the way of such benefactions. So the two inmates of the Ritualist mission bungalow, with their increasing mutual repulsion, had for four months been able to drive quite separately to their business, which consisted of little more than attendance at the Club and at station dinners.

But it was out of the question for Fulton to keep the two Residency menials who rightly went with Shaitan, one to sit behind in livery and the other, of lesser pretensions, merely to curry-comb and feed the great beast. With his degree of a medical missionary on probation Fulton had to seek one who could combine the two functions. Maruti was the result.

How the scrubby Maratha resented having the horse's gram measured out to him by Daniel, who watched till it was eaten! Fulton would have done the watching himself had he not felt practically assured of Daniel's honesty in a minor matter, wherein he was himself watched. This is the one small piece of work which Europeans will themselves do in India—this and, where there are young children in the house, the personal watching while the buffalo- the rare cow, the goat, or it may be the ass, is milked.

Maruti was pleased to receive many ching orders for Lingam, with extra rations. Yet as the menial of a master himself out of service he had food for serious thought. So much he, like every person within the compound, already knew, that the Doctor Sahib had lost even the income he had.

Fulton knew that they must know so much. How much more they knew he did not curiously enquire. Natives are pretty apt to know anything of which you make a secret With rare self-restraint he had never spoken to Daniel of his adventure with Betty Stuart at Lingam, in March With as rare discretion Daniel had not, now or earlier, made any enquiries of his master on the subject Fulton felt that Daniel would certainly have enquired had he not known Yet while at Lingam he had been as if in a vacuum, in a wizard's globe, cut off from his usual world

Did Daniel even know that there was an essence of all perfections called Betty Stuart? Highly likely, since so much was a matter of public knowledge in Kanhala, where there was much interest in her situation as a destined bride of Shiva But of any connection? of the morning's message? Again highly likely. Mathabai's visit had not passed in silence. Could there have remained any doubt, the marching orders for Kanhala probably settled it

No, Fulton could not count upon any advantage there might have been in leaving unknown to try to help his sweetheart. You simply cannot do things in secrecy in India, and it is much better not to try to. This lover still clung to the advantage of arriving suddenly at Lingam. "They'll have swift steeds that follow" No telegraph line stretched into the jungle in that direction, while the posts were rudimentary. Yet in India there is telepathy in the air, particularly where religious or sensual interests are concerned.

The tonga from the town had meanwhile driven rattling up. In it Fulton proceeded through the corner of Kanhala city, the threading of which made the undesirable feature in the location of the mission bungalow. There were no side-walks, the people

were apt to be turbulent and fearful of the passage of a European. To-day they were much more than usually excited, and well might be so. "Jai Kali!" they sometimes shouted in honour of the wife of their predominant god; and at other times "Jai Mahadeo!"

Fulton knew what it meant. These Marathas were exulting themselves over the fatal, and the imminent condemnation, of Miss Smiler, who had run amuck against their favourite deity. Fulton was a little slow in realising that they seemed to be personally shouting at him, against him, with defiance in their tones.

"Good heavens! I didn't steal little Yamuna!" Then a grim spread over his candid features as he added: "But I'm going hotfoot to steal, if I can, my big and beautiful Betty from the same conveyancing. Common enemies make common friends. After all I'm in the same camp with Miss Smiler, God bless her! I didn't know how much of a passionate I was until to-day when I came to be called one."

And he repeated, in wistful self-justification:

Dem Kali-ites in my boy
Killer-um dem heathen christ.

Leaving behind him the exultant populace he drove through more than a mile of the camp or cantonment of Kamlah, till the tonga again approached the banks of the Krishna in entering the wide grounds of the Residency. As often during the Monsoon, a gentle rain was falling which was not enough to hurt anyone, and in which even the natives in their flimsy garments moved about freely.

The tonga drew up outside a moderate building in the corner of the compound. It consisted chiefly of one large room. No stir or bustle denoted that it was here the important trial was going on.

It was within half an hour of two o'clock, the hour of the Anglo-Indian tiffin. It was therefore befitting that things should be getting wound up, as was the case.

The court room, which could have seated two hundred, contained perhaps fifty persons. The people of Kanhaka, although so eagerly interested in the trial, rather disdained attending it upon alien premises, and conducted by a foreigner. Some of them trolled in and out, all very quietly on their bare feet, but had not as a rule the patience to sit long watching the hushed proceedings. A glance was often enough for them, since they felt assured of the result. An occasional respectable woman, quite unveiled, was among them; as Marthaby had evidently looked in earlier in the day when Yamuna now soundly asleep, was on exhibition.

There was no sort of grade of dock or bench. In a corner of the room, on the plainest of chairs, at a small deal table, sat the Acting Resident, John Corsand, I.C.S. He was a broad-shouldered young man, well groomed yet looking tired, in a fresh grey suit, never made in India. He was turning over papers, saying things almost in a whisper to a native clerk at his elbow.

Opposite to Mr. Corsand, at a little distance, in an easy chair, which he had ordered to be fetched for her from the bungalow, sat Mrs. Smiler, badly dressed, collapsed, plainer than ever, looking very ill. On a form behind, leaning over to speak to her, was her European barrister, fetched from Bombay against her will, at great cost, by missionary subscriptions. She wished to conduct her own defence, prompted by the Lord; but it seemed safer to some who loved her to have Mr. Lowden.

He showed a livid apoplectic face, crimson running into purple, set off by snow-white moustaches. He had done his best for his client. Lowden had a

great reputation, was making money hand over hand, and at the same time killing himself by heavy work and drinking in the climate of Bombay, for the benefit of an extravagant family in England. It was to be noted that for all his reputation (or because of it) there was no family found in the station to put him up, and he had to live as he could at the travellers' bungalow, which was just then crowded with Eurasian reporters.

These, with some reporters for the native press, covered several benches, for no trial for many years had aroused such widespread interest in Western India as this of Mrs Smiler. The representatives of the press were quietly scribbling on their knees. Everything was done with impressive and insistent quietness.

The last word had been spoken for the defence when Fulton entered the room and took an inconspicuous seat. There seemed to be the exaggeration of simplicity about the proceedings, which seemed at times to stand quite still. But around Mr. Cosand, who hardly moved and who spoke so low, there was the unmistakable atmosphere of power—the power without parade, based upon essential things, seeking justice if not always reaching it, which is the ideal of English rule in India.

"Mrs Smiler," said the judge of the Residency Court, who had no sort of assessor or equal with him. This time he spoke up loudly and clearly. Mrs. Smiler made a becoming effort to sit up in her chair at attention.

"Miss Smiler, by saying as you have just now said, that you would repeat the act of kidnapping with which you are charged, you have put it out of my power not to find you guilty. It does not here matter how good your motives were. The State Government, I am sure, and all decent people, share your horror at the traffic in young lives which is

sometimes carried on under the cloak of religion. Such things, let all understand, are contrary to the Indian Penal Code It is expressly forbidden to dedicate to an immoral life any child of years so tender that she cannot judge for herself. You will be glad to learn that this court shares your concern for the future of the child Yamuna. Particularly good care will be taken to watch the doings, in this respect, of her adopted mother, Premabai. The latter stands open to prosecution under another heading of the Code, the obtaining of a human Being by purchase for any purpose whatsoever. That does not excuse you, who had nothing to do with the situation, for acting as you did I therefore find you guilty of purloining the child Yamuna, at Naroli, in April last For this I sentence you to the lightest punishment at all commensurate with the offence. In addition to the confinement you have already suffered, you will be imprisoned for one month, subject to the sanction, on medical grounds, of the Durbar Physician."

The same studious quietness prevailed in the court room. The trial upon which so much depended was over. One could not have told from the faces of the natives present if they were pleased or not as they shuffled from the benches and made for their slippers outdoors Mrs. Smiler received her sentence with a brightening eye, probably proud of it Neatly at her feet, on the floor by choice, sat a comfortable fat female of middle age, in a gold-fringed crimson sari. This was the retired Murah Premalxa, good-natured and still good-looking. Across her knees slept Yamuna, out of sight of most, with a cloth over the little face to keep off the flies She was quite as loving a mother to the baby as Mrs. Smiler had been, and possibly in a more congenial environment

The sentence had been pronounced as most of

the proceedings had been conducted, in fluent Marathi a good deal better thought Dalton than the speech of any of the Kurukhet missionaries. Premabai therefore understood without an interpreter the threat for herself whereat she shook like a jellyfish.

Was this terror at the bullying of an alien ruler? Premabai had never been so amused before. It was undying laughter which shook her though she tried not to appear disrespectful before a tyrant in authority. She had her little treasure again, who would be worth an income as well as affection to her declining years.

As an informal group gathered around the magistrate's table, Premabai rose with some difficulty to her feet, flung Yamuna, still sleeping, face downwards over her shoulder, and waddled out to her tonga. There the child was again adjusted across her knees.

"It makes me laugh again," she said to a friend before driving off "to think of these fool Feringhis, and how little they will ever understand our ways."

"This is a young Resident Sahib, and a grave one, of good repute, not of tottering mind like some who have been before him. But behold, their best wisdom is our folly'

"What they cannot learn is the madness of measuring themselves against our immortal deities, the gods of real things, suited to our kind. These do not wish for the worship of the Sahibs *log*, who have their own gods, suited to a cold climate, powerful doubtless, but less so than ours. But what our indulgent gods cannot endure is to be interfered with by an outsider. Shiva, for instance, to whom this little one and myself belong, and who hasn't the best of tempers!"

"That threat that Yamuna shall never be his!"

"As for me, I care so much for the threat. Tuh!"

and Premabai blew a feather from her with lungs that were like a pair of bellows "I am not to dare to dedicate Yamuna to the god until she be of years to dedicate herself? Perhaps, and if so, what matter? I shall have the bringing up of her, I shall direct her tastes and passions, I shall make around her the air in which a Muriah grows up"

To create an atmosphere, that was nearly everything. Premabai sincerely believed that there was nothing evil in her life or her thoughts, since all were so natural

"So I bear no ill-will, 'she continued, "towards this Sahib who has just decided forme; how should I? But for himself I am alarmed, since he has flouted my god with threats Not for a little would I be the Resident Sahib's brother or his wife."

"His Bespoken," put in the friend. "They are not married, but she is even now on the Black Water, coming to him from Vilayat"

"What can it matter? I wish her no harm, yet am sorry for her. How these people can wait to such an age until they marry! Other lands, other manners But it was all bunkum for the Sahib to pretend to speak in the name of our *sarkar*. We have no better customers, Shiva no keener adorers, than in the ruling family. To be sure, the Maharaja is an old saint, too silly to care for girls; I cannot understand that sort of devotion. But his brothers are unlike him in every respect. Raja Ram Rao, now—there is no greater tearer in the State. Another time I will tell you of his latest infatuation, but the tonga must depart, salaam"

Meanwhile, inside the court room, the bare-footed, blue-rigged policemen of the Maharaja's force had led off Mrs. Smiler to some destination which Fulton could hardly imagine. He felt a distinct discomfort at the sight, which Mr. Corsand shared.

"I wish I could stay and do anything to help her," thought Fulton, "but it would not be allowed. And I can trust old Dr Sampson to stretch a point in her favour."

As he could not approach Mr Corsand without seeming to intrude he tore a leaf out of his pocket-book and sent it to him by one of the peons of the court, with these words upon it in black lead

"I am in urgent need to see you a some le sung."

Fulton saw the messenger present it to the Resident, who looked across at him with a smile. Then, upon the same page, he scribbled:

"Am busy all day, but shall dine alone Come at eight"

Whereby it appeared that Dr. Fulton, even if not a favourite, was an accepted member of station society. He knew what the invitation meant—an intimate evening in the little room at the end of the big dining-room, such as he had not been asked to in Corsand's time.

As he drove back he found the city people yet more exultant over the verdict In the streets there was no attempt at decorum. "Jai Kali Jai Shiva!" was vehemently and even venomously shouted at him, so that he felt sure his mouth never felt ashamed at sitting so near him.

"If they knew the errand on which I am bent," he reflected, "not a bone in my body would be safe. Just think how much more risk there will be in the streets of Lingam!"

The people were not highly pleased There was a resentment mingling with their triumph. They considered, as Fulton could tell from snatches of conversation overheard while his tonga was occasionally blocked, that their rights had been grudgingly, or generously, vindicated

"Corsand will have a bad press to-morrow and through the next week. How hard he tried to do

his duty, without fear or favour. That is the way to please nobody. The Hindu press will be indignant at the leniency of the sentence the *Bi* papers that there was any sentence at all in such a cause. I hope Corsand feels sure of his own law how far the Penal Code applies to native States and to this one in particular. They cannot stomach his criticism of their customs, though he was careful to mention no names, and specially that promise, threat it seemed to them, to watch over the youngest Murali I suppose he felt he could not say less if he wished to keep his self-respect, while others will declare he did not say enough But hark! I feel decidedly in an alien land."

For it was still "Jai Shiva! Jai Kali Bhawani! Shiva shall have his own, Shiva shall eat up his enemies"

Fulton did not attend the Club that afternoon There was also little packing to do, since in the Lotus-eaters' land such things are left to servants

Instead, he paced the verandas, excited by the message he had received, filled with what lay before him, absorbed by the thought of the perfections of Betty Stuart. The last theme so possessed him that he began to beat out verses in her honour, leaning upon several lines which already haunted him. The verses came as never before, tuppingly, responsive to his eager feelings.

THE CINNAMON GIRL

Oh crack up no more the pale girls of the North,
I have loved them enough, I have found out their worth
With her tender true heart, and her breath sweet as honey,
The Cinnamon Girl is the girl for my money

Down the river of Kashmir the doonga boats go
Through a landscape of green under mountains of snow;
Pink-flushed in the water, and each sits singing
At the prow, from far countries her doomed lovers bringing

Two thousand miles southward, Kailasa mount
A bouquet of exotic flowers full of grace
Golden mandara sweetened, parijata fragrance
On the Island Jagat of Lord Malabar

And amongst all lovely petals would like to unknow
Varied charm noble purified with beauty's glow
The Mahadevi's adornment
Classic-featured supreme of womankind's body lock

But I seek them no longer, I've lost with the quest.
For well to light love of my heart united
Sweetly aloft, locked upon pearl cowl
Above the brown eye of my Himavan Girl

I haste to her now where dwells my lover
The virtue of fruitless she a mental whose love
A wife kind and my sister better humility
And the Himavan Girl is her gift for my mystery

Note—The longest trek before Sheetal to journey
Kerala's lovely northernmost

CHAPTER V

> Then since the so in power
> Draw back and fear to compromise their greatness,
> Myself will fling my fortunes to the fray
> And win the maiden porch
>
> *Unpublished*

MR CORSAND felt disappointed that evening, and not very well. He was somewhat shorter than Dr. Fulton, and of a frame which ought to have been robust. He had permenently impaired his vitality by the effort of getting into the Civil Service fifteen years earlier. But he had not, as continually happens in India and sometimes in England, strained his mind beyond recovery by his University studies. Corsand's mind was searching if a little slow, and was carrying him far in the regular branch of his service. Good judgment he was believed to have, memory, industry, altogether the pale cast of thought. Those qualities, together with his character, had secured him a brilliant career, which he intended to have interrupted by the episode of Kahhala.

For him it was no prize to be pitchforked into this stately Residency, at the whim of the Supreme Government. The Political Service was all right in its place, though Corsand had definite opinions as to the qualities fostered in it. But the appointment had stopped him in a breathless race which would have brought him, in another fifteen years, to one of the Lieutenant-Governorships. He felt sore on the subject, and talked too much about it.

Not like any other man's, Corsand felt in an unusual mood of self-pity, had been his efforts to make a career, to get the initial chance to make it.

He had well-nigh broken himself trying. No man alive knew the labour it cost him, and only one woman, who was then a child. His eyes went up to the mantelpiece of the little dining-room. There, suitably framed against the clinical steel, was a photograph of a woman, not very young.

At some such thought his hand went up to his own hair, which was touched with grey at thirty-seven. He jumped to his feet with a start, and had a good stare at himself in a mirror.

Young still, for most purposes he had to conclude, full of rightful vigour, and with the best of life still before him.

He remained standing and with an elbow on the mantelpiece closely inspected the picture which he held in his hand.

"I wonder, has Agnes gone at all grey in these three years? It doesn't matter, since she is Agnes. Four years younger than myself! Oh what would my struggling boyhood have been without her sympathy! I do not believe I could have pulled through. Certainly I could not have qualified without the good classics which her father ground into me without fee, from pure love. I can see myself now, twenty years back and more, the eager student, making my way in the winter evenings to Mr. Grant through the blackness of the rectory grounds, Agnes, likely enough, waiting to open the door to me, with her curls flying about her shoulders!"

He, the studious son of the smallest of village chemists, yet a kind old man; Mr. Grant, the widowed scholarly rector, who had made a pupil and a companion of John Gerrard. That was the situation. It had lasted, with variations, for a decade. The struggle had been a severe one, for all the helping hands which England reaches out to the boy of brains. Yet it was mitigated by love, which for long did not call itself that.

"I would have been a clodhopper but for the Grants!" thought Corsand gratefully, and perhaps with injustice to himself. "But why do I, on the eve of marriage, and certainly not old, dwell thus wistfully on the earlier days Anyone would think that it was the living over of one's life which comes before death!"

He could not get his mind from the Grants. His relations with that rectory had been perfect during a quarter of a century while he lived in the shadow of its woods, from Oxford, and on the frequent runs home to which the Civil Service entitles one. His had long been the superior position in life. But it was the other way that Corsand considered things, idealising the Grants; and it is an infinite blessing to be able to do so towards someone while one can. The rectory had never shown him patronage, jealousy or suspicion. For its sake Corsand, though hardly a believer, must always remain an admiring friend of the Church. Only Agnes now knew that he had once had a twang from the village school which had laboriously to be cured

"Bless them," he thought; 'yes, alive or dead! And Agnes is at last on her way out to me. She entered the Indian Ocean to-day I shall meet her in Bombay next Friday morning. I could not ask her to leave the dear old man while he lived Now she, who used to seem to me such a great lady, is without a home almost without a refuge and without means. Yet she has known for these fifteen years that she could share whatever I have by lifting her little finger *I never loved another woman. I doubt if I could love another, and to that degree my heart is ossified. Nor did I ever care for the light loves of this land: possibly I am not normal in that. It is a matter of temperament with me. I suppose* I am not full-blooded, like that young doctor who is forcing himself upon me to-night."

He stared anew at the picture, which was one to reward inspection. Agnes Grant's hair still curled obstinately. The little ringlets would not be pressed down over the snipely brow. A candid, comely face dwelling always amid the unfolden ways, and looking years younger than any alleged age.

"An old maid?" Incredible. Yet it was time I settled down. I suppose I was always settled in character—and so far on the road to being a prig! But I need the intimate care and companionship of a wife. I have often wondered what it must feel like to be married. So the frog used to wonder how it must feel at the bottom of the well: only if he risked jumping in he could not get out again. An admirable analogy for marriage! But I shall wish to jump out less than most, being more lucky."

Mr. Corsand did not occupy that wide Residency, in which so many dramas had passed, without some sort of a white woman to superintend the things which a man cannot look to. The disgrace of a bungalow without a Madam Sahib would in that case have been magnified by the premises.

There kept herself studiously out of sight a woman, not young, although "intolerably severe." Mrs. Macgregor had come from the steamiest plains of Bengal four months before. She was so nearly white that no one dared utter the word of shame anywhere near her. About her dead husband there may have been more room for doubt. Whether his ancestry mounted to one of the victors of Plassey, or merely to a railway navvy in the days of the Mutiny, Mr. Macgregor had somehow risen to be a provincial magistrate before his henpecked death. What was more, he had been a first-class magistrate.

It made a capital label and asset in life—widow

of a first-class magistrate. It impressed all, and frightened some, specially the wrongdoers. For, as Mrs. Macgregor would point out to her toadies, no one could go further in that line than to have first-class magisterial powers, Mr Corsand himself, in his capacity as magistrate, was not more than first-class

There was a section in Kanhala society in which Mrs Macgregor was beginning to predominate, which worshipped her with much complacency on this score. 'Housekeeper at the Residency"—that too was a rather impressive tag for those who could not visit there

"Poor old girl," was Corsand's summing up of the situation. "I'm afraid she'll have to go, though it's a shame to spoil her career in trades society. But Agnes shall decide"

Mrs Macgregor's rule was efficient enough, but bleak The Kanhala Residency did not usually run to a housekeeper when there was a wife, daughter or niece available. In such ways there is more simplicity of life in Western India than in other provinces; and a white valet is noticeable even for the highest official.

It is not by a lot of apparatus that results are attained or one's soul comforted The health of the Resident at Kanhala, several times in a shocking condition of recent years, was supposed to be guarded by a medical officer of colonel's grade, boasting himself to be the Residency Surgeon Corsand had no use, except socially, for this man, greatly his senior, who lived in another bungalow upon almost the same scale, and much more cosily because married

When Fulton was announced Corsand felt that he could have done without him. Yet he rose to the demands of hospitality; he would be polite if he could not charm

"I'm not likely to have this outsider again,' was his thought "Certainly he'll have to make his way with Agnes, but I shan't recommend him to her. If he's chucked the Ritualists I don't see that he has a leg to stand on. Poor snakes they're not the kind of Churchmen I like; but they at least gave him a background, a connection. Now he is adrift."

So even Corsand was not above the fixed Indian feeling that only Government officials are truly respectable. After them, those holding some definite position, merchants or missionaries, backed by large organisations, may be tolerated, yet merely as the interlopers in old days Those who are on their own without a label are noxious adventurers, a danger to the prestige of white men, derelicts mischievous to themselves and others And the right-feeling derelict, as has been explained, wishes nothing better than to be blown out of the way for the public good"

Corsand had evidently heard something at the Club that evening

"I say, what a terrible black eye your Padre has!" he chaffed.

Fulton laughed it off, without troubling to explain. He saw that the cat was out of the bag Yet he knew that hitherto he stood rather better with Mr. Corsand than did the priest, who had not been allowed to continue his tame-cat frequentation of the Residency

So he chaffed back discreetly about the portrait on the mantelpiece, which he really thought charming, and the wedding journey to Bombay next week. He dared not forget that this was the head of station society.

"I need this man," Fulton's troubled brown eyes seemed to say, "to smooth the way for Betty and me. He does not need me. He may be less cross

after dinner. I will be as crafty as I can in my advances."

The two men of such different positions sat down to dinner in the modified dress suits which are a very sensible contrivance for Indian evenings. This night it was not at all hot, with the light rain falling outside, and a pleasant breeze blowing in.

Fulton had not brought Daniel, who even in his reformed state was apt to be overawed by the Residency servants. To-night he was busy getting his master's things into storage, as had been arranged.

The best European food that can be set before grandees in India has been defined as garbage. That is too much to say, though the generous red meats of England must always be lacking. Mrs Macgregor had not allowed it to be said of this dinner, which moved on noiseless wheels through many courses of made dishes.

"God knows if I'm alive twenty-four hours hence," thought Fulton. "I'll have one more good feed before going into the wilderness."

The drinking was moderate, consisting of claret and a peg apiece. Fulton kept a weather eye upon his host.

"It's no use, I'm feeling down," was well nigh Corsand's sole remark. "It gives me the blues to think of that poor woman whom I had to sentence to-day, marched off between native policemen."

"You could not have done differently, or better, Mr Corsand. I don't believe it's the blues you have, but a chill. You look tired, and may run into malaria if you don't have another stiff peg. Take my word for it as a physician!"

This, Fulton's favourite prescription, which had sometimes had amusing results was rejected this time, while a second peg was forced upon himself. Nor could the adventurer, considering the heavy jaw, if not the glumness, of the Acting Resident,

quite bring his tongue to pronounce the rule's name without the "Mi

At a later stage Corsand began his familiar grumbling about the damage done to his proper career by this cross-appointment to Kamlala. There may have been a hidden pride in this, since to most men, much older, it would have meant promption

"There is no chance for a man nowadays if he once flinches from the path of competition."

"Ah yes, there is, if he does it by express order. The great thing is to be *wanted*. You'll find the I C S changed to C S I. soon enough."

For once the chestnut lacked savour

"Ah no, I shan't, Dr. Fulton. No such luck for me! I'm side-tracked, a back number, out of the running altogether. This day's business won't help me"—which was truer than he thought

It was ludicrously terrible if one stopped to think of such things, how far Fulton was from considerations like these

But if the dinner had been dull there was no reason why the evening should be so.

Corsand seemed suddenly to pull himself together, as if realising his duty as an entertainer.

"I say, this can't be very amusing to you, doc. But you may be interested in a letter I received this morning."

Fulton was at once alert.

"Yes, Mr. Corsand, what was it about?"

"The final light upon my predecessor in this Residency eighty years ago. You know how keen I was to learn anything about Major John Sutherland. Well, I've learned it."

"I hope it was worth while."

"That depends. If I were a novelist it would certainly be worth my while, for a romance may lurk behind, however dingy. I've been on this scent ever

since I came here, where a letter awaited me from a man who is editing an Indian book for one of the Varsity Presses. He wanted information, uncommonly hard to get unless you burrow in the right places, about John Sutherland, a friend of his hero I'd never heard of him, though I'm rather of a dab at Indian history. I had to verify in the Residency records to make sure that the beggar ever existed Yes undoubtedly He had a spell of nearly five years at Kanhaka staying on at the end to introduce his successor, another Mayo fellow."

Fulton tried to show himself a careful listener.

"This Sutherland is in none of the easily accessible books of reference. Yet he was not a nonentity in his day. There are indications that he was a man of sterling qualities. He appears in a singularly engaging light in Meadows Taylor's *Story of my Life* He was a writer himself. Sutherland turned out a book on the Native States in which he anticipated Lee-Warner by sixty years also did a memoir for Government, later on, about the niggers of Cape Colony, where he went on long leave. Why did he go there? Rum, stuffy hole to go to, when you might reach the Atlantic! They went to all sorts of queer places to recuperate in those days, poor wretches, sailing about in the Bay of Bengal in search of breezes I have even read of Madagascar and the Persian Gulf as health resorts. Anything, anything, rather than the India which was killing you Europe was then on the other side of the world, and there were also wicked, artificial restrictions. You lost your service, in some cases, by going beyond the Indian Ocean. All the same, what took Sutherland to the Cape for the last big treat in his life? *Like seeks like*"

Fulton was really interested, smelling a story. Corsand was like another man, his eye alert, his voice vibrating. Here is one of a different mental

compass from recent Residents, thought Fulton Corsand was now in Kanhala, he did not wish to continue there, yet how vigorously he had grappled with a local problem from the past!

"It's a first-rate mystery," said Fulton. "Sutherland seems to have dropped out from his rightful remembrance."

"Dropped out? you don't know how completely he's dropped out. Not but that it's the luck of most men to drop out when their short day's work is done. But Sutherland was a man of value, too good to be forgotten like that. His descendants, for instance. There should be heaps of them, elderly grandsons and great-grandchildren galore. Their ancestor served here in the days when Dickens was beginning to write and Victoria to reign, and young Rajah Brooke sailing romantically to his kingdom. That's the epoch for you. What more likely than that the progeny of such a man should now be serving in India, eager to recall him? So I wrote, I will not say to all the Sutherlands in India, but to a round dozen of the more prominent. The way they are scattered, from Burma to Bannu, and the positions they occupy, are instructive to the genealogist—colonels, medical and military, barristers and bankers, a knighted merchant, a forest officer, and principals of schools of both sexes. You shall see in a moment, Dr. Fulton, the like of the answers I have received. But they, one and all, deny and insist, *I know him not.*"

"I suppose you are sure he left descendants?"

"That one would suppose from the way he appears in Meadows Taylor. I wanted badly to get into touch with his family, and if possible secure his portrait for the banqueting hall downstairs. For there, too, he has dropped out from the company of his equals. There's a gap where his portrait should be, as if someone had thought of him but in

vain. They've just finished installing electricity in this building. I don't believe you've seen the hall lit up. Perhaps you'd like to go down with me and have a look at the old Residents in a light they never dreamed of. Then, on our way back, I can step into my study and bring along the Sutherland correspondence."

The Residency, like certain greater bungalows, was of two storeys. The electric installation was the work of Corsand's quiet energy, and proud enough he was of it.

They passed first through the larger dining-room, six or eight times the size of the one they had eaten in, then down a broad flight of teak stairs, thence to the left. Here, occupying a great corner of the building, was the banqueting hall used in that capacity hardly once a year. But it was a popular show place in the station. Strangers could penetrate so far at proper hours, as into College halls, and gaze at the pictured worthies overhead.

This hall had to be unlocked for the Resident. He knew just where to find the electric knob, and was pleased as a child to turn it on before the servant could. The vast room was flooded with light, better than much electricity in England.

After all it was no College hall. It lacked the stoned windows and the oak, while the pictures were even worse. In truth there was little here to be proud of save the size and the historic associations.

Corsand was so penetrated with these as to be quite excited. It gratified him to have a companion who could in any degree follow him.

"I like to think of the way in which these buildings, the best that could be raised in their day, went up, at the cost of subject states, from one end of India to the other from a century to a century and a half ago. By the palms of Malabar, amid the snows

of Nepal or Kashmir! In Travancore, where they wanted us very particularly, the lucky Resident has half a dozen such houses. They were meant to impress the imagination of men, as they do mine."

"Yet you grumble to be here."

"That's another story. Perhaps I am a grumbler, and I lament my career in the Bombay Civil Service. Yet I was never so lodged there as to require a housekeeper. As I was saying, such a setting as this is partly to compensate for the climate, and even more to remind us of the largeness of our duties. We live here, as we must be ready to die at a moment's notice, in order to maintain the right. I don't know why this is so borne in upon me to-night. There have been thousands of Residents in India, yet never has the life of one been so presented as by Meadows Taylor, who held one of the smallest of such posts at Shorapur."

"I'm surprised at the number you mention."

"Think. It is a century since this building went up, in the days when the Maratha empire went down. Few have ever occupied the post five years. In fact, there have been over thirty Residents at Kanhala, neglecting *locum tenentes* like myself, who don't count. I think the collective spirit of the place has done pretty well to gather portraits of two dozen of them, less the one whom I seek."

In fact, along each of the two longer sides of the hall were ranged a dozen large paintings, save for one corner nearest the door, where there was a vacant panel. By the dates preceding it might have been meant, as Corsand averred, for John Sutherland, or equally well for his successor, Colonel Spiers.

There was not a word to be said for the paintings as such. A decade of Indian dust and glare will do as much in the way of damage as a century in Europe. The large incomes, as they seemed, of Indian officials,

and perhaps their egotism, have during a century and a half caused a larger concourse to India of artists of repute than one would think. There have seldom been less than several artists working there of approximately A.R.A. rank; while the end of the eighteenth century saw a number of the earliest Academicians taking journeys from end to end of India. Anglo-Indian portraits should, therefore, be of a good order. But there were none that showed as such in the Kanhula Residency.

Most of them were blackened or withered by the moderate lapse of time past recognition. Noble fellows some of these must have been in their day. Others were mediocrities doddlers, even the exploiters of native sovereigns who were known in earlier days. What stories might they tell could they speak; and perhaps the worst men the best stories. Now there was little to distinguish one from another save the fashion of the face which alters with the generations. Fulton was specially amused by certain bearded faces of the Mutiny period: one old fellow showing such wild eyes behind a hairy face! "It shall be one thing in the grave."

"Come away," said Corsand. "This is capable of being rather dismal." He suddenly turned out the lights. "I wanted to show you the hall under illumination, as much as the panel which I believe destined to hold Sutherland's portrait. And I'll tell you where I think I can get it, though no painting of him may exist. I'm bent on putting through this tardy act of piety."

He led Fulton by a roundabout way, passing at his study. From his desk here he took up a thickish file of papers, held together on a string, and also a letter which he carried separately between his fingers; and thus they returned to the small dining room.

"We might as well have stayed in the study," he

continued; "but make yourself comfy before this empty fireplace. Pull up that chair where you will have a good light. Now look through those papers and tell me what you think of them."

It was really an interesting budget, chiefly of letters, illustrating the scattering of a family. Not one knew anything to the point. "Our British historical records in India," wrote one Sutherland, "are all too faulty, and I am only too glad to try and help if possible in this matter." Another, a woman, remembered when last at home seeing a letter written by a young soldier (but not the right one) from Bombay in 1817. "I laid aside the letter, intending to keep it as an interesting impression of Bombay of those days, but unfortunately in the confusion of packing it was mislaid."

"Not much help so far," remarked Fulton.

"And yet if you can believe it," said Corsand, taking the file out of his hands "at the back of that file are whole pages of detailed information about Sutherland which you will hardly care to go through. I had better tell you the essence of them. My D. O.'s, demi-official letters in all directions, have had some result. You may have seen that I was on the track of the statue to him which still stands in the public gardens at Ajmer. Here is the inscription: 'This monument, in memory of Colonel John Sutherland, Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana, who died on the 24th June, 1848, was erected by his friends.' "

"He began to emerge into the round. Very much so in a statue. His friends probably saw that it was a likeness. That's where you can get a portrait of sorts."

"Exactly, my friend, I'm glad that you are so acute. The memory of such a man could not be entirely lost. While I was rummaging out here, others were unearthing dry facts about Sutherland,

chiefly dates of appointments, in the London offices. So in a way we know more than we need to. Here," turning over leaves, "is a long extract from an article in the *Pioneer*: 'Leaders of Irregular Horse 2 John Sutherland.' No end of good small fighting against Pindharis and others, yet nothing very human. This other note—four or five pages of it—compiled for me from the East India Military Calendar and other sources, really gives a reasonable view of his entire career."

"What was it?" asked Fulton somewhat wearily.

"Dash the details—let them go! What blight is there that rests upon merely military performances? But I'd like you to see so much of Sutherland's figure as I have reconstructed it. Born while the French Revolution was going on. A cadet and ensign at the incredibly early ages of that day. Got into the service first military and then civil, of the Nizam, backed always by Sir Charles Metcalfe, who thought a lot of him. That was how Sutherland had the chance to show kindness to Meadows Taylor, some fifteen years his junior. From about the age of thirty he was right in the Political branch of the Company's service. He followed Metcalfe here and there. Then Resident at Kanhala. For the last nine years of his life Sutherland was A.G.G., Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, officiating or permanent. He died in harness as such at Bharatpur in the year of the other French Revolution."

"That would about cover the first half of the century."

"There was no finer generation in our Indian life: nor did our name ever stand quite so high as in their youth. I have only suggested the outside of the man. But read this, which I received this morning."

With an aggrieved air he passed Fulton the letter which he had kept between his fingers.

"'My Lord,'" began Fulton, reading aloud. 'Heaven help us! who addresses you like that?"

"A former clerk of mine, who means no harm We are exposed to such foolishness in our service, specially from men in the North, who have studied Persian.'

Fulton read the letter, which was in English, in silence, without comments.

My Lord,

I have just received a letter from Mr ——— which runs as follows so far as Col. Sutherland is concerned. "I do not know in what various places Colonel Sutherland served, nor could it be traced from the old records here to what regiment he originally belonged. "As to his family, he is said to have left India for the Cape of Good Hope, with 4 of his sons and 3 of his daughters, together with their mother, a Mohammedan lady."

I had written to a friend of mine in the Comptroller General's office, and I shall submit further particulars to you as soon as I hear from him.

With profound respects, and hoping this will find you in the enjoyment of excellent health,

I remain,

Your most obedient and humble slave,

Signed,

Fulton did not instantly see the point.

"These people seem to know less than you have told me."

"Yes, except for the new and fatal fact."

"Ah yes, where are my wits? The Mohammedan lady." And Fulton blushed as he spoke, he could hardly have said why.

"The Mohammedan lady!" Corsand almost shouted, driving home the point which he had waited so long to make. "How many things in

Anglo-Indian history they explain, those Mohammedan or Hindu ladies! Generally Mohammedan since these are less exclusive than the Hindus; and our forefathers out here would fancy that they were nearer to us because they ate meat and were people of one book. Wives, mind you, and of the most respectable—that made the mischief. Often very sweet creatures, of princely families, lovely in their youth, faithful and submissive always. Thus the more effectually they could drag down our race in some of its noblest representatives!"

"You feel strongly, Mr. Corsand."

"Who? I? Not at all. Only I have given some attention to the subject. And this morning's letter was something of a shock to me. I would not have suspected you of it, John Sutherland! Yet why not? During the same years the famous Resident in Nepal, a man more intellectual than there is any reason to think you to have been, found happiness in a romance with a Mohammedan lady to whom he remained true till her death. There was every temptation to decline like this. Think of the isolation, when Clive was once ten months on the voyage to Madras! How your girl in England ceased to write, and her old letters grew yellow and moth-eaten! And the dull eyes around you, suited to the climate!"

"Exactly," said Fulton, feeling uncomfortable "You think it was a mistake in every case?"

"Not in the least. There is no excuse in these days. But I'm not judging the old Johnnies, often better men than ourselves. For all that, one regrets it on their behalf. I had begun to idealise Sutherland. I'm no longer interested in him. No, that's too much to say. But to think how he had a native woman about these rooms, on these stairs mistress of this Residency! Probably veiled, and proud of that amid the unveiled Marathas. In

reason one must admit that at least half a dozen of the Residents pictured downstairs had similar appendages That doesn't recommend me to Mrs Sutherland. An excellent wife and fruitful branch. Think now of those four cinnamon sons! What to do with them? Sutherland couldn't even make troopers of them in his own regiment, like the original James Skinner. Cooks or clerks, more likely. Their descendants may be in my kitchen or *kutcheri* As for the daughters, they may have been dears, but where were the husbands for them?"

"Come, you are too hard, you would hurt some people's feelings."

"This does not wring your withers, doc. But it is perfectly true. And so explanatory! Incidentally it explains the intimacy between the Sutherlands and the Meadows Taylors, with their Mohammedan affiliations Perhaps there was a romance in the beginning as so often. Since Colonel Taylor has not recorded it I do not see that any other can. It haunts me none the less, the original romance of Brown Women and White Men. It explains how, later, when his health was breaking up, Sutherland could not face his native land with his dusky brood, but preferred to put up with some half-way arrangement like Cape Colony. Above all, it explains why, so far as records are concerned, his progeny has disappeared like a Central Asian river in the sands I've been rather driving it into you, haven't I?"

There could not have been a worse introduction to what Fulton had come to talk about He wondered, he rather doubted, if Corsand had brought up these subjects, and had so insisted upon them, of malice prepense. But he was incapable of that. What had happened had come about of itself, or as the natives say, *sahaj*, casually.

With a change of manner which seemed brusque, Mr Corsand took the mean advantage always in the power of the one who has been sought.

"I believe you had urgent need to see me at leisure?"

Fulton felt pretty cheap as he answered:

"So I had. But you have rather taken the wind out of my sails by what you have been saying. What do you know of Betty Stuart?"

"I know the name, as any Resident must who attends to his duties And little more, I am thankful to say If I did, it does not follow that I could tell you"

If Fulton felt a lack of breeze, Corsand felt a chill breath circulating in the little room.

"I meant no harm," Fulton faltered. "My need to learn what I can about Miss Stuart is urgent"

"So you have observed But I will not go in for small mystery-making Betty Stuart is the daughter of an Englishman and an officer—formerly commanding the Maharaja's forces, who made just such a marriage as we have been discussing, substituting Hindu for Mohammedan, and a dancing girl for a woman of family. This is the result—a *product* with a vengeance! Betty Stuart is a ward of the State, which would like to resume much of her property which came from it not so long ago. It is a tradition at the Residency to see that she is not put upon, because she was once a Christian and her father was a good man Would you like me to give you her address?"

"Thanks, there is no need."

Corsand glared at his visitor, in the opposite easy chair.

Fulton was thinking: "How much does he know of my plans? Has the Padre blabbed what he has heard or put together?"

In miraculous response to the thought, Corsand spoke:

"I know nothing of your plans, Dr Fulton. The Padre told me no more than that you had assaulted him and left his mission. Believe me, had I known I would not have brought up the subject of mixed marriages, certainly not have dwelt upon it as I have done."

"Thank you, Mr. Corsand."

"But having said so much, I must now ask: *Are you after Betty Stuart?* What is your interest in the matter?"

To himself he was saying: "I shall suffer for my kindness to this outsider. He was born to make trouble for me. He is detached, adrift, at a loose end, belonging to nobody. Such adventurers, often with the best intentions, make the worst mischief in a county which can never assimilate them. Fulton comes here NO MORE."

"I am after her, Mr Corsand, since it is a case of true love. I ought to tell you that I drive out to Lingam to-night."

"The Devil you do."

"A moment, Mr. Corsand. I have received an urgent summons from a member of Miss Stuart's family—in fact, her Hindu grandmother!"

"Worse and worse. What combinations! So you are in for it, you know that?"

"I love Miss Stuart, whose honour is in imminent danger at the temples of Lingam."

"Nothing of the sort. You're off your head, Dr. Fulton. I am credibly informed that Betty Stuart, having reached the age of sixteen, advanced if anything for this country, wishes to dedicate herself and her fortune to Shiva."

"Informed! By such Brahmin advisers as led your predecessor by the nose."

"Hold hard, Dr Fulton! It is not for me to

discuss my predecessor, whom I did not know. It is your chief credential (which won't go too far) that you were General Rowney's friend. I am perhaps harder-headed."

Therein spoke the incurable arrogance of the Civil Service, of which Corsand was ashamed as he heard his own words.

"They lie, whoever tell you that Betty Stuart goes to the sacrifice willingly. Never will she be the Bride of Shiva. She is a true, merry, innocent young girl, though with a pack of undeserved troubles. She has summoned me, who wished to marry her, to save her by taking her away from her dangerous surroundings."

"Including the legal guardianship of her mother. I admit that the situation is complicated, not to say harsh, if Betty Stuart wishes to remain a good girl."

"Oh, if you could ever see her, talk with her, you would not doubt."

"It will be an evil day on which I ever talk with her. She is now a Hindu and as good as a Muralli. You don't know the touchiness of these people where their religion or their pleasure is concerned. But when the two are combined they make an irresistible, an infernal combination. That is why Shiva is such a perilous god."

"I begin to feel like a missionary at last. I must defy even Shiva if necessity for my sweet girl."

"Then you will come a cropper, like that woman this morning, and without her famous consolations. You will do more harm, being less of a fool. I won't be too sure, either. But Shiva is too big a god for you to defy, young man."

"I can but do my best to rescue my true love from force and from abominations."

"Has it struck you how hard up one must be who has to appeal to you?"

"Exactly. Doesn't it make you sorry for Betty? I hoped to enlist your brains, your power"

"You want to drag me into this affair, but you shan't Have you given a moment's thought to what you can do on reaching Lingam? Only to break the law in some form or other! You are bent on going?"

"Absolutely"

"I wish I had the power to arrest you, to break Shaitan's legs! Since I can't lay you by the heels for your own good I must plead with you, reason with you. Don't go, my dear fellow, even as a good citizen Do you know what an Indian riot is? The country is in a peculiar, incalculable condition of late Any rashness in this connection may well light a fire which will make ado for King's collectors and Governors to put out."

"My girl calls to me to rescue her."

"Who is thy beloved more than another's? Betty Stuart has had an upbringing which would leave little character to most girls There, sit tight, I meant no harm You want to get your backers into trouble, I believe that's what you want Well, when you find yourself laid by the heels, or worse, don't expect me to send the wing of a regiment!"

"I won't, Mr. Corsand, I promise you."

"Perhaps I'm scolding. But listen, if you are amenable to reason. This Lingam is a dangerous place, a focus of disloyalty, a hotbed of passions racial and political as well as sexual. We have constantly to turn a blind eye to what is going on there Yes, half our art in governing India hitherto has consisted in overlooking things, in favouring our enemies at the expense of our friends. Why can't the natives have one place all to themselves in the wilderness? I dislike Europeans going to Lingam as much as they do. I disapprove of Connoll's Hotel

standing there, and of the globetrotters who come to it from the Mysore side."

"I was very glad of its shelter once."

"So have too many fools been, who can't le Hinduism alone in its most sheltered recesses. I quite approve of the punishment the intrusive fisherman received from Tiberius—you're a classic aren't you? We don't want to know what devil tries are brewing there. Enough if we can save—but we can't—an occasional little Yamuna from being drifted there. I've done enough for one day on the side of the angels. Shiva is a bad fellow without engaging qualities. In this connection I've been trying to read the earliest long poem in English about India. Do you know this?"

He passed him *The Curse of Kehama*. It was a podgy book, two volumes in one, the third edition, without the beautiful printing of many books of a century ago.

"No," said Fulton, turning the leaves.

"Then don't. Such stark idiotcy, such bare barren badness not negative but positive, I would not have supposed possible. What a mind Southey must have had, as dry as a bone! There's a famous passage here, the only one, on love. I suppose it's as a lover that you excuse yourself?"

"I am not anxious to do so," said Fulton, stiffly at last. He was getting fed up with Corsand's dogmatism; and he never could bear to have things approved or disapproved of.

"It's all very well to say that all the world loves a lover. But he must not love his self-interest too manifestly. I suppose you are aware that Betty Stuart's fortune is considerable?"

"Yes!" said Fulton, feeling that Corsand was becoming offensive, perhaps on purpose.

"For India, very considerable indeed. If you marry her, don't be sure that the money will follow

her. It's a cause which will unite the Hindu faith, to keep such a fortune, once expected. The dodges of some of those holy men! There's one at Lingam in particular, I forget his name."

"Hari Pant."

"That's it. I shall never have dealings with him, and I advise you not to."

"He seems to be Miss Stuart's peculiar confessor and controller. It is Hari Pant who pulls the strings."

"Let him, but he does not recommend his pupil. Why, I understand there are pupils of his, widows and Mughals, who study at English Varsities and tempt M.P.'s."

"I can hardly believe such things. Betty Stuart, in any case, reacts against his influence, struggles to escape from it."

"Her efforts, even if sincere, will be as vain as the struggles of the bird charmed by the serpent. Drop the whole business. Hari Pant is not the only one to fear. There are other priests in the background, as strong, with powers which I am content to call occult because we do not understand them."

"I wish to secure your help for the deserted child, otherwise I would not put up with your tone altogether."

"Bother my tone, so long as I wish you well! Dr. Fulton, oblige me, show yourself a loyal subject, by keeping away from Lingam. Though you have missed the I.M.S., I will use all my influence, which is enough, to get you some medical job almost as good."

Fulton felt that words were of little use. He shook his head many times, then rose to leave.

Not to part upon a hostile note, he paused to admire anew the countenance upon the mantelpiece.

"Surely," he thought, "this good girl, if she

knew, would approve what I am doing, and would ask her lover to help me."

"You go to Bombay next week, Mr. Corsand?" he said aloud

"I leave on Thursday morning. Miss Grant who lands on Friday, will stop with the Archdeacon of Bombay and Mrs. Wilton.'

His words came like pistol shots this time. Evidently he resented any conceivable correlation of his love affair to Fulton's. Between the archdeaconry and Shiva's temples!

"Wait a moment," he continued, looking up from his chair at the doctor's tall figure, now grown rigid. "I'm sorry that our evening and our acquaintance should end like this".

"So it is the end," thought Fulton, standing the stiffer.

"For the last time, doc, will you give up this hellcat trip to Lingam?"

"I'm damned if I will!"

"Then you must be prepared for what men, including myself, will say of your conduct. They will say that you have not merely, like many a young fool in his lust, endangered the British peace by meddling with Indian womankind at a time of public tension. They will say that you did it from avarice, and that you are after Betty Stuart's fortune. At the best you will be marrying 'a witch with a dowry.' May you be like the husband in the old play, who took her, to have her in his and her house; and who found 'that, O Apollo, is the worst of evils.'"

"Who says that?"

"Someone in the Middle Comedy. Listen again to this one, more or less: 'If, being poor, you marry a rich woman, you give yourself a ruler and not a wife; you reduce yourself to be at the same time a slave and poor.' All that was true among

the Greeks two thousand years ago Yet they did not then know, they would have scorned, the complications of unions with inferior races and queer religions."

Determined to be reckless in no detail, however it might be with the main enterprise, Fulton could only stand still and listen, cold with anger. So even the credit of true love was, it seemed, to be denied him. "Save his own soul he hath no star."

Corsand went on with his lecture, harping upon the note of insult

"You love the classics, Dr. Fulton--more fond of them than ever of theology, I believe" It used to make Fulton blush to think that it was not upon them that this irrevocable year at Oxford had been spent Yet his devotion to the subject was greater than his knowledge of it. He was no such scholar as Corsand. Classical studies, if not exactly encouraged, have been pursued in Residencies both before and after Mr Cordery of Hyderabad translated the Iliad.

"For my part I never could see the fun of seeking a wife richer than myself. The Roman poets could not, either. Horace mentions the wife ruling by means of her dowry—*dotata regit virum conjux*. Martial, also a bachelor, declares that he wishes no rich marriage: it does not suit him, he says, to be married by his wife—*uxori nubere nolo meae*——"

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Fulton, who could stand no more of this, and who was too upset to follow the Latin.

"Call the Sahib's tonga," shouted Corsand to the servant behind the door.

This was how Fulton left the Kaulula Residency for the last time.

* * * *

It was little past eleven. Much of the heat had

been taken out of the enterprise by the reception it had received. This was not Fulton's first experience of the attitude of power in India, meaning the Civil Service, towards romantic love. He could not have written his verses now. He felt a personal disappointment in regard to Corsand, whom he had not thought to find so conventional and unsympathetic.

He had to think hard of Betty's personality and charm in order to hold to her after the snobbish sneers, as he esteemed them, at loves chocolate or cinnamon. He could only go forward, since the backward route was closed. His duds were in storage, the missionary house was closed to him.

"Betty in distress is calling to me," he kept saying. "Let me try not to be too great a fool or I shall fail to help her."

In the dreary rooms, now quite dismantled, there remained only a parcel of photographs done up in a newspaper.

"Go, and do not come again until the dog-cart is ready," he said to Daniel, who squatted upon the threshold.

The photographs were the memorials of the earlier loves of his youth in more than one land, the earlier loves whom he had forsworn in his verses. Some of them were poignantly, discomposingly dear still. The thought of them might deflect the compass which must hold true to his new purpose. It was time that they were destroyed by fire.

With a heavy heart he carried the photographs, without again looking at them, to some dry ground at the back of the bungalow. Here he watched while they arose in flames. Once he winced when, curling in the fire, a Jewish face of perfect oval outline looked for the last time at him.

As he turned, he was aware of the priest spying

upon him, also for the last time, from a bathroom door

"The dog-cart is ready," said Daniel, looking scared

Without a word Fulton went around to the front of the house, mounted beside Maruti, and drove away

CHAPTER VI

The p ung ng be ats
That beat from Zanzib r
KIPLING.

WHEN Fulton had left the small dining room Corsand turned to the mantelpiece and gazed long upon the face of his beloved.

They were features to reward study, sweet with records and with promises.

"My helpful darling is she thinking of me now?"

And she was, as she snuggled into her berth, on her first night within the Indian Ocean.

The Resident pressed the glass of the photograph to his lips.

He did not exactly thank the Lord that he was not as that man. But he did say to himself:

"How much more wholesome is my English love than affairs like those of Sutherland, of Bertram Stuart, and of this doctor fellow! I won't admit that he has spoiled my evening altogether."

He sat down resolutely in a good light and opened the refractory, the rocky volume of *Kehama*.

Corsand was, as he had boasted, hard-headed. He had pushed through much bad stuff by sheer motive power, but never anything like this. He had taken the book out of the station library, in his own compound, because his attention had been drawn to Hindu Gods by the case of little Yamuna.

The one good sentence, by Southey, in the double volume was this: "No figures can be imagined more anti-picturesque, and less poetical, than the

mythological personages of the Brahmins." Corsand quite admitted this initial disadvantage of anyone seeking inspiration among the Hindu deities. "The intelligible forms of ancient poets" are not there. Definition and comeliness are entirely lacking.

None the less, Southey need not have done so desperately ill as this, or he might have left the subject alone.

"I never did in all my life!" cried Corsand, growing angry. "Between the two, they *have* spoiled my evening."

Still he read obstinately on, determined to finish at least the texte

"I never did read such drivel, such sawdust. These choppy lines, to call themselves verse! They might pass, if there were any richness of thought, any atmosphere, any poetical feeling! In these thousands of lines there is nothing tolerable except a humdrum account of a pagoda, and the passage on love, which I could improve when I think of Agnes. The very idea of a Hindu heroine named Elfenia! Of course she is nebulous and without charm. Her situation is a wee bit like that alleged of Betty Stuart. But could not one have done better than this in the freshness of the thought of India, which had intoxicated Burke? Better had Southey written of Clive and the conquest of India, better of any full-blooded Indian—I admit they are not many—but Akbar, or Shivaji, or even Hyder! No, I won't say that, for he would spoil any subject"

In the silence that followed, the trained mind was grinding through the last section or two of the pretended epic. They were almost without meaning. Corsand felt much as the mill must feel without grist to work upon.

He read out the last two lines with grotesque intonation:

And in the Swarga, in Yedillan's bower,
All whom he loved he met, to part [illegible] more

"O bloating emptiness, summing up the whole! Go to the limbo of unbaptised babes!"

He flung the stodgy volume far out of the open window into the night now dripping with rain. There it lay in congenial slushiness till a Residency peon in scarlet picked it up the next day and carried it to the library. There the librarian, a softly-stepping Babu who loved the outsides of his books (as Southey did) painstakingly dried it in the sunny sun and over a brazier of charcoal. He gazed reproachfully at Corsand out of his dimmed brown eyes for some days without daring to say a word. An ordinary subscriber would have been fined for such mistreatment of a book.

"How publishers can continue to reprint Southey among the British poets!" was Corsand's thought as he stumbled into bed. "Only five more days here, and six nights, before I start to meet Agnes."

He had not read Southey's Letters, which he was aware that some admired. He felt sure that he would hate them as much as Macaulay did.

Nor had he read the extensive notes to *The Curse of Kehama*, at the back of each volume. These are less bad than the verse, if only as having been written by others. Yet they suffer from being extracted by a mind arrogant and pedantic beyond measure. They are a revelation, as to how little accurate knowledge of India had been attained a century ago. The face of picturesque India was well illustrated by European artists long before the religion and the history of the people had been by scholars. Two of the best Anglo-Indian writers in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the genial Colonel Mark Wilks of Mysore and of St. Helena, and Scott's friend, the glowing Leyden, had to conduct their researches in the face of difficulty

which is now negligible, if it exists. This was the systematic effort of their Hindu teachers to baffle them, to keep them off the facts and to teach them wrongly in the name of religion.

The value of the notes to *Kalama* is therefore limited by the death of authorities who have survived as such. Yet in regard to a great outward institution like the temple girls the testimony of two or three centuries ago is as striking as that of to-day.

Shiva the destroyer, the third but the outstanding deity in the Hindu triad, who more and more appears as the enemy, is naught to look at. He is described in the Puranas as "wandering about surrounded by ghosts and goblins, inebriated, naked, and with dishevelled hair, covered with the ashes of a funeral pile, ornamented with human skulls and bones, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying." His body is usually of a white or silver colour, and differs from the human chiefly in the head and arms. Instead of one head he has more often five, each of them with a third eye in the forehead. His arms vary from four to six. In his hands he usually holds a trident, one or more human heads, a cup supposed to contain human blood, and a sword or some other instrument of destruction. Thus rendered, fantastic, and, strange to say, feminine, rather than terrible, Shiva may be seen in idols at the British Museum, and in more than half the homes of India.

Each principal Hindu god has a favourite *vahan*, or vehicle, that he rides upon. Shiva's steed is the zebu or neat little humped white bullock of India. The bull Nandi thus is called, and is shown seated on the ground, thus avoiding the difficulty of the legs. Very pleasant images of Nandi, in shining granite,

are a common sight in and about temples to which Europeans may penetrate The bovine expression is far better rendered than the human or divine. Dr Wilson, the famous missionary in Bombay, who liked his solemn joke, often laid his hand upon such a recumbent bull, remarking: *Sic transit gloria Nandi.*

Shiva is occasionally mounted on his vahan, while his wife sits on his knee He is sometimes shown with matted hair like a religious mendicant asking alms, or seated as if in profound thought. His heaven is Kailas, one of the most stupendous summits of the Himalaya, where he is enthroned on the edge of a yawning gulf among eternal snows and glaciers. *Kailasvasi*, a dweller there, is a euphemism for "deceased"

It is Shiva's wife who has rightly one thousand and three names, none pleasant to dwell upon Parvati, one of them, is at least borne by millions of innocent Hindu women in every generation. Every association of physical horror is accumulated about this goddess in a way which would seem to show a fundamental lack of taste.

Shiva is the god of lust merely, on this side of things The god of love, in any elevated or ideal sense, is Kama, who has no temples Quite spirited images of him, with a suit of cane, drawing his bow, while seated upon his steed, the boy or parrot. The name of Kama is embalmed in the most transcendent collection of love lyrics ever composed by a European in India.

"How entirely charming a woman may be at thirty-three, whether a girl or a mother."

This was Colonel Littler's frequent reflection and remark as he gazed at Mr. Corsand's betrothed.

He wished that she were his; and often said so in his charming way, where the twinkling eyes

and the tone of persiflage could pass off most things

Miss Grant allowed him to hang over her and to talk to her like a father very much in love He had kept this attitude from the beginning of the voyage, and during three weeks had held the youngsters aloof simply by being a more amusing companion

Edward Littler was no army colonel, but a "pill-box," who by luck or merit had during twenty-odd years been Civil Surgeon in a number of the most famous cities of Northern India. The appointments were good, with exceptional chances for private practice He had made the utmost use of these, helped out by a manner the secret of which consisted largely in being always merry, and making much of his interlocutor Polish there was withal, in utterance and in person Everybody had liked Littler, as captain, major, colonel. He was probably a good doctor, for the standard is high in the Indian Medical Service No one doubted that he was an honourable good fellow.

He had not suffered from the tragical lack in most Anglo-Indian lives, that of tolerable company. Indeed he had met, and won, most of the celebrities who had passed through the great cities of India during several decades. His wits had had no need to get moss-grown. A trifler Littler inevitably was, to some extent. "Where the bee sucks, there suck I" This was true of the affections as well as of the intellect. He had never spoiled his looks by undue application, in climates unsuited to digging, either to the literature of the past or to the medicine of the future. Nor had he been able to contemplate, until this voyage, such a thing as tying himself to a single heart.

He who had been slender though never tall was now undeniably tubby in his pretty grey suit, with his carefully tended plump hands. At fifty

ne was getting bald, while the mustachios in a vigorous face were becomingly white. This was Littler's last term of service in India, his home run following the run home He had at least shown his medical capacity by keeping himself always in admirable health. He was young, for his age, with possibly the happiness of his life before him.

Such was the squire who tucked in the rug about Miss Grant when she had come on deck at 6 o'clock fast. For in that Monsoon atmosphere the sun was hidden though no rain fell, and the air was fresh. A steady breeze, coming all the way from the Cape of Storms, blew behind them and to the starboard. The slow steamship Malaya, such a one as the knowing often prefer had entered the Indian Ocean the day before, and would yet be nearly a week reaching Bombay

"Of this, at least, no one can deprive me" Colonel Littler was discreetly murmuring. "But after the voyage I don't see where I come in."

"I fear you do not come in at all, dear colonel."

He looked tragical, so far as was possible with eyes still dancing

"Not at the swagger wedding in the Cathedral by the Bishop to-day week? I could be contented with the humblest function. Yes, though it would break my heart to do so, I would even be willing to give you away."

"So you have said daily, when not proposing."

"Love's divine self-abnegation"

Miss Grant smiled without answering, showing delicious dimples in both full, smooth cheeks. It is so much more to the point if a woman can do so

Littler gazed in admiration. Miss Grant was susceptible to a neat turn in speech, and this was his occasional reward

"How charming a girl may be at the age which you absurdly give yourself!"

Agnes Grant still looked a girl. She had regular features, with the essential comeliness that is not impaired by years. Her character had also helped to make such a face. Here there was not the mawkishness implied in *a sweet woman*. There was positively a blue gleam at times about Miss Grant, when her eyes answered to the touch of blue which she liked to have about her dress. For the rest she would have been called dark, a frequent Devonshire type, chiefly because of her ringleted hair.

Corsand was quite wrong about that hair. It need not have any grey in it for these twenty years. Black it looked in certain lights but more often an admirable brown. Of any shade, it was a crown of glory. From earliest childhood Agnes, as she well knew, had thrown the most bewitching shadows—and silhouettes from a candle, upon the wall. Her father, and after him several others, had maintained that it was impossible for her, at any angle, to cast an image which was not charming, too quickly vanishing. Nothing could make her hair lie quite smooth. Sometimes it curled more than at other times. But always about the ears, or over the shapely brow, were little convolutions altogether like a wedding ring.

Agnes was not a clever woman. But she had lived with a few clever men, including her father. So she knew quite enough not to profess to be remarkable in any improbable way of her own. She had lived with men rather more than with women, in the charge of her father's rectory, which she had held during most part of her life. This had made her but the more feminine. She liked it best this way. And even the frumps, male and female, who made a great part of her acquaintance, had

tender liking for Miss Grant. She had the shrewd sense to see that men are only antagonised by self-will in a woman, who can have a far better time in life by making them pay. There was nothing of smartness about her.

"So you will not even let me give you away!" Colonel Littler began again.

"I do not see how I can. The Archdeacon is to give me away. Mr. Corsand has arranged every-thing."

"Trust him for that. Mr. Corsand be blowed. They have things too much their own way in his service, they are too fond of arranging every-thing."

A smile of comprehension, without disloyalty, was his reward.

"You recognise the truth, Miss Grant?"

"John and I are not acquaintances of yesterday."

"I know you are not," he said, chewing a mous-tache with somewhat less than social preoccupation. To himself he was thinking:

"What a wife she would make for me. She's too old for Corsand, but just the right age for me. Heavy-jawed, quick-brained men who romp into the Civil through competitive examinations, they leave no chance to anybody else in India. Men of no family, often as not. John Corsand, now, used to clean knives in Mr. Grant's house, till he was asked into the study."

Littler believed this. Nothing that Miss Grant had said to him regarding early intimacy with her betrothed had appeared to contradict it; nor would the difference, perhaps, have been worth explaining. It was the legend from one end of India to the other about the most rising junior member of the Bombay Civil Service, an exaggeration due to the military jealousy of brains.

"What are you thinking, Colonel Littler?"

"How the Civilians get all the plums, the prettiest girls and the latest posts. There's one of them just been appointed head of the Bombay police. Unless he's a heaven-born policeman, what can he know of the job? Yet it's in the Covenant, not of Abraham but a more important one, by which all positions above a certain value go, to the Civilians. I will say this for them, though," graciously, "they work hard—much harder than I do——"

"I'm sure you wrong yourself."

"No I don't. I never could mug. And they're muggers in the line you're marrying into. You don't know, do you, that mugger is our Indian word for crocodile?"

Miss Grant, who did know as much as that, smiled, as she was desired, at the image of the long-snouted monsters.

"Exposed to sudden death, too; but then we all are that in India. So Corsford has arranged everything about the wedding. Who are the brides-maids?"

"I really don't know; friends of John or of the Wilsons."

"Hum! You'd better make sure which. A bride only bridesmaided in India if country born, may not even be kissed by the giver away! Don't I know these weddings! Next Saturday it is to be, and I out of it."

"I'm sure you'd be welcome if you cared to stay over a day on your way to the North. John will be interested to meet one who has taken such good care of me on the voyage."

"Will he? No, many thanks, I'll take my broken heart with me by the Punjab express. The arrangements you outline do not attract me, save for one figure. Stuffy; and, if I may say so, ecclesiastical."

"Don't say that, since it's my one wedding."

"I shouldn't. Yet I can see and hear it all. An Indian archidiaconate is a little thing. I believe you don't know Mr Wilton? Bombay doesn't run to a Dean. The dandy Bishop, who performs, will scatter his blessings with a fluttering motion, to show his sapphire ring. 'The voice that breathed o'er Eden,' will be intoned by a more or less dingy choir. A photograph of the marriage party or perhaps more than one, seeing he is a Civilian will appear in the best illustrated paper I know"

"You are unkind"

"I don't mean to be For this will not be one of the smug groups, showing a highly creditable kindred, from up country. I don't doubt that Lord Chillingham, the Governor, will be contained in it."

"I can't say John will arrange things"

"Of course, in the humblest way possible I believe he leaves Kanhala on Thursday, for our arrival the next morning Small people in his State are much concerned in the wedding of their Resident You will have to return with him under arches of triumph. 'God bless our Resident!' Lucky if you don't get 'Welcome to our Residentess.'"

"Even that I would stand for the good will expressed, and for John's sake.'

"Of course you would, Miss Grant; and it's a shame for me to try to frighten or depress you. And for the sake of the position in life. It's no little thing to be Residentess in Kanhala."

This too Agnes knew. She had waited for it until her father no longer needed her, over how many runs to England of her lover!

"And the best part of it," Littler continued, "is that the position is inherent in Consand. He carries it with him where he goes. Not many young men could resent being given charge at

Kanhaka simply because it interrupted something better"

The situation was not new to her. Her heart had its own deep satisfaction, mingled with recent grief. But she said nothing knowing by happy instinct how much better a woman is liked for talking less rather than more.

"So I must congratulate you," he said, magnanimously. "You are in the keeping of a strong, good man. This voyage will not end like so many to India."

"Why, how is that?"

"*Le Vaisseau des cocuses!* A French writer has lampooned the P. and O. under that name But without him, the English girl, going out to marry the man she has not seen for an age, is famous for changing her mind on the way It has become a commonplace in Anglo-Indian life. The poor man, in his station up country, pelting himself *together* ordering suits, repairing his bungalow journeying down to Bombay to meet his bride, while the station exhausts itself in provincial preparations. When he boards the steamer, she tells him, or has him told, that there is hay in his hair, and that, in short, she has found a better man or one better feathered, on the voyage."

"How unthinkably cruel!"

"Not at all. Uncommonly sensible, if she thinks so. I assure you, it has happened on most voyages, not excepting this one But you have not found a better man than Corsand, have you?"

"Certainly not" she answered with a merry laugh, yet decisively.

"Then I seem to be out of it," he persisted with the drollery, the light touch which saved the situation "Yet believe me that there is a better man aboard who [redacted] in love with you, though youth, standing, old acquaintance are all on the other side.

Such is his devotion, that he is even willing to play second fiddle. Remember that in the North he is wearing out his heart for you."

"Your shadow will never be less, colonel."

"Unkind, could you wish it?"

Then, edging away to a group by the rails which he had been wishing to join, he crooned in a voice for her benefit only.

Farewell farewell fair friend!
This vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more!

The vessel that bore them was trying to save coal, rather than dancing lightly over the Indian Ocean. There was a favouring wind nothing less than the edge of the Monsoon which swept round the whole of Africa. It was a refreshment after the unequalled stuffiness of the Red Sea. It gave ventilation to the engines; and broke the surface of an often stagnant sea into all sorts of glad little waves.

A liberalising and enlarging influence, in Anglo-Indian lives where many influences tend the other way, is the habit of frequent voyages. Of course it is possible to carry your own narrowness with you, as many do, like the personal aura which extends for about two feet in every direction outside each individual. Some can no more cast it off than they can their mental limitations, or their anxieties. Yet, other things being equal, it is much to be familiar with great winds and seas and distances, to know at least the coasts of strange lands, to be able to shift continents as those at home shift counties.

The group which Littler joined was watching the

last cape of Africa as it faded into the woolly cloud wrath.

"Good-bye and good riddance!" said a member of the Indian Educational Service. "'Always something new from Africa' the Romans used to say. 'And never anything good,' they might have added. We could say the same, during the fifteen hundred years following them, and knowing sides of Africa of which the Romans never dreamed. But never a good thing came out of the Dark Continent. Of course I bar material wealth like diamonds or gold, which once torn out of the soil leave it clammier than ever."

"That is a wholesale indictment of a continent," remarked another. "Say that the negresses do not attract you, that the air of Africa would quickly make you ill, the sun smite you."

"I should think it would! A stroll ashore at Port Said is enough. There is no such vicious or deadly sun in all India."

"I daresay not. The Indian glare is enough for me."

"I understand that it is nothing to that of Africa, even in parts far enough from the equator. Take South Africa, now. At times there seems to be nothing left but a craze among literary neurotics, who have perhaps escaped death by consumption there, to crack up its bitter charm, its unapproachable delight of thin air and squalor and glare. It requires initiation. Take the glare in particular. India has plenty, even in the Monsoon, compared to the mellow light of England. But at Johannesburg, with its elevation, there is a sort of glare which lasts through the twenty-four hours. It seems that you can never have the comfort of true darkness. A suffering woman who has lived there has told me of something like a white light throughout the night, which used to get behind her eyelids, so that she

could not escape from it even by shutting her eyes."

"I should think there was a patient for you, colonel What would you say of such a thing?"

"That it was no fancy," answered Littler, "but genuine suffering on the part of one most unfortunate Years in England may not be enough to restore her completely. A considerable proportion of my cases come from glare, or from the sun, even in India. I am thankful to have no experience of Africa, which is far worse in every respect."

"Hear hear!" cried the educationalist, who seemed to have a personal grudge against the vanishing continent "I don't hold with *Ex oriente lux* There was never such trash, at least for modern times. Yet Asia is a gentleman of a continent compared to Africa Its people have features, its climates are human, its past has some history. More than an ocean separates the two"

At this moment a little girl of eight ran up to the group, seizing her father by the hand. Mary Harding had hazel eyes with long lashes, a comely little face which was now much animated.

"Oh, papa," she said, "come and see the little boat which is trying to join us!"

"Nonsense: there's nothing of the kind."

"Yes there is, just under us. Come and see! Oh, do come" she cried in her excitement

"I'll come with you, Mary," said Colonel Littler, taking her hand

In another minute everybody, including the ship's officers, had seen what the bright-eyed child had been the first to see.

An Arab dhow, running north, had grappled to them.

Most of the passengers were by this time leaning over the starboard rail, seeing what they could.

"I saw them first," claimed Mary.

"So you did, dear, and deserve a reward for it"

The steamer had not stopped, but was running on at half speed. Far below her, hooked to her side, and making a great splashing of foam as she was dragged along at unaccustomed speed, was a small Arab dhow.

The passengers from another world looked downward with amazement into this microcosm.

It was a hollow ship of no length, yet such as used merely to cross the Indian Ocean in the days of the Portuguese and the Dutch discoverers, probably in the days of the Roman Empire and earlier.

It was of fantastic and elegant shape, lacquered around the outside rim in a strange pattern, upon which expense had not been spared. Most of the space seemed to be occupied by a leg-of-mutton sail, still bellying with the wind, but useless. At the stern was a cabin about the size of a table, out of which peeped several dusky children with correct features. There were about a dozen people aboard all told.

"Out of water ape they?" the passengers of the Malaya began asking. "They must have had some good reasons. Yes, that is it"

With much quickness, as if such happenings were not altogether unknown, two small barrels of water were lowered into the dhow. Then, before one knew what was up, before more than two or three of the passengers had had time to drop some small silver down to the children, the grapplings were released, and the dhow fell off from the steamer. Voluble, guttural protestations of gratitude came up from below. There had been a vision of Arabs in flowing robes not quite white, of a woman or two veiled even there. Then all was hidden behind the high sides of the dhow, with its lacquering in

green and red, its disproportionately tall prow and stern.

"So it's all over"

"What a glimpse into a life we can never know!"

"I don't think I'd care to know it much better, with those hateful figures of veiled women!"

"No, they are corpselike, aren't they? To think that from them, and from their persistent silliness in this matter, came the veiling of Indian women wherever it is known!"

"It is a far cry from Arabia to India, yet it has carried."

"I wonder whether there are any looks behind those veils? I doubt it."

"You do well to"

"The kiddies were not so pretty as Indian children; yet an advance on pickaninnies"

"What a pest the Arabs have been in world history!" the professor, the dispenser of information, was saying. "Yes, boats like that the world have freely crossed this ocean for two thousand years and more. These are the seas, and that is very nearly the ship, of Captain Sindbad. Within a hundred years such vessels crossed the equator to the conquest of Zanzibar. There is some romance about that, eh? Yet the Arabs are no good save against niggers. If you must have an Asiatic land, give me India. There is a constant traffic in such dhows from east to west. How the spirit of it has been rendered in a snatch by Kipling! Yes, I knew the wonderful boy in Lahore. In my youth I also knew George Meredith at Box Hill. He used to say that those mottoes to the *Plain Tales* have more of the spirit and the sound of the old English ballad than anything else that has been written in modern times. Listen to this, of which we have just been reminded, but which even inland will sometimes haunt me for weeks by the mere magic of its sounds."

He would have liked to take off his hat. 'With intense enjoyment, for he was a professor who felt, he repeated :

[illegible]

CHAPTER VII

Cold and pure a maiden was I in the courtyard of the temple,
Where the crowds of human kind flutter'd,
Where the incense-fires their fragrance,
Telling of the many vows
Hid behind the veil of Islam

But the maiden fond to enter, when the curtains swayed, and
I like weed,
Where the sound of music float
Where the sighs of love were stifle
In the bliss of mystic song,
Hid behind the veil of Islam

Lyman Purple

ON the same night that Dalton set off for Tingam, but some half a dozen hours earlier, while there was still light, an unpretentious native vehicle left Kanhala for the same destination.

This was but a tonga, and one, which rattled painfully, though it had to be strong for its purposes. It is as well that natives seldom aim at smartness, since it is almost impossible for them to attain it. This vehicle lacked paint, and the ponies elementary grooming. The top, for there was one, though Europeans prefer to have this removed when there is no fear of the sun, gaped for lack of mending, as did the cushions. The driver was a wild specimen, whose turban end flew backwards at times in the face of the occupant behind, and who leaned over his team, hissing and whistling to them, in ways which no European would have endured. Yet the master, who sat on the back seat, could have bought up Edgar Fulton how many times over!

He did not sit as a European would, though that

is always awkward on the hind seat of a tonga Rather, he lay out along the seat so far as space permitted with his knees in the air and his left arm over the little back piece to give himself a grip against the jolts. It was the most prudent and comfortable position he could adopt, if he had to be behind, as the due balancing of the two-wheeled vehicle rather required.

His draperies, too fluttered in the air, showing hairy brown legs and bare feet. It is to be hoped that the togas of the Romans were more dignified, they were at least neater of cotton

Waman Sangley was an old fellow of sixty, an age beyond that usually attained in India His face was wrinkled like a withered apple which it somewhat approached in colour, being not at all dark It was no more than moderately kind or griping in expression. He had not had himself shaved for several days. His grey penthouse eyebrows overarched keen brown eyes which were now faded. Across his forehead was painted, in sticky yellow and red paint the sign of the god he worshipped, though as no specialist or devotee The symbol, two or three inches wide, was not unlike a Maltese cross, but with bulging, curved members.

Wamanrao was a Brahmin. Sleeping and waking he carried about with him that consoling consciousness. He was not as other men, even of the only faith. He had been created from the head of Brahma, all others from some less noble part. He was a Maratha Brahmin, an expression which it has been already attempted to prohibit, meaning a Brahmin of the Maratha countryside and speaking the Marathi language, even here where Maharashtra runs down into Dravida, where the harsh Canarese is largely spoken and many complexions are of a diabolic blackness.

But that was as much as Wamanrao was, or would

have cared to be He was not a priestly Brahmin, therefore not of the sacrosanct sort. Indeed, he had his opinion of the temple priests. Yet he was not entirely a secular Brahmin either, driven to clerkships and the like for a living His was just the right medium. There is a class of holy men in the Deccan called *gosains*. They oppressed the land while they could do so, but generally in connection with their occupation as bankers

In modern days many *gosains* have dropped the holiness, but stuck to the banking when they could. Wamanrao's family was among the more fortunate. Beginning as nominal mendicants, they were established as bankers and general agents in Kanhala. It was on no great scale, for Brahmins have not as a rule strong commercial talents Yet they were proud of the combination

Wamanrao was not the head of his family so much as its most experienced member and its servant. That is one result, an unselfish one of the joint family system. It was nearly time for him to shuffle off the cares of this world and to retire to meditation or idleness. In his hot youth he had often taken this tonga drive, through the long night, to Lingam for the usual purposes Now he was withered, his fires were spent, he no longer cared for such things while sanctioning them in his juniors. He had married grandchildren, some of them grown up Hindu life is thus divided, not unbecomingly, into sections, with varying duties.

The grizzled old fellow was journeying to Lingam, after a long interval, for perhaps the 'ast time. It was in order to rid himself, if not the family firm, of the biggest of his secular charges. He was not sorry, though it was not by his express wish that this had come about. He was summoned to Lingam to give account of his stewardship at the whim of a woman whom he could not respect.

He was not afraid to deliver change. Wamanrao had been moderately honest in this as in lesser business affairs. He might pick and steal with a finger or two, but for the most part his two hands were devoted to the interests of his clients. His conscience, for he decidedly had one, did not reproach him. He had not cheated more than a little in the half dozen years which he had managed the property of Betty Stuart.

He thought that he would have been justified in cheating much more. He sometimes wished that he had, for the benefit of his family and his faith. For the Stuarts were not like any other clients. Wamanrao had kept essential faith in dealings both with Moslems and with Christians yet more alien. The absolute mercantile honesty reported of the Chinese is not found in India, perhaps for lack of talent. But, as things go, Wamanrao had been more honest than he need have been.

The Stuarts, since Bertrand Stuart's death, were neither one thing nor the other. Vembai and her daughter had not had the steadiness to remain so; people in their position are fortunate if they have. But, having been quite legally established by General Stuart as Christians, a recognised standing as that of the rulers of the land, they had given it up and were wriggling to get back into Hinduism. They had thus no community behind them to protect them, no connection, no background; and were fair prey to all.

"I have pushed on percentages to the utmost," Waman Sangtay was thinking, "and might have turned a few more thousands of rupees without any trace appearing. But never mind, since it is all for the benefit of Mahadeo. That is the one thing I like about Vembai, a woman I never cared for. But her devotion to the gods is to be commended, with her determination to make over to the temples the

daughter and the fortune which came to her from the Feringhi husband for whom she deserted us To be sure, she is not going about it the right way She is premature, in her haste to be restored to he caste. That is so like a woman. I have brough the inventory of the property, in the form of a dee of gift from Nilabaj to the Lingam temples I hac to do as ordered, and will make my client pay through her nose for her eagerness Nilabai may sign thi at her mother's building, but it is legally void while she is a minor However, that is none of my business I dislike going into the house of these defiled ones. What I cannot forgive in Venibai is the way in which she abandoned an honourable profession and the service of the god to live with an actually to *eat with* (laugh) a white man. Her daughter is but a mixture, a contamination, though a strapping girl as I understand. Mother and daughter are alike *defiled*'

The last word, referring to merely ceremonial matters, is one which Hindus can use with unqualified offensiveness. Yet Wamanrao was hardly a bigot, only an ordinary orthodox Brahmin.

So he drove through the night, on a journey which would have exhausted many. He did not watch the constellations swinging overhead, for the very good reason that not only the tonga top but the Monsoon clouds intervened. Sometimes he nodded off between the jolts; for it almost seems as if the natives can snatch their sleep like the birds.

Wamanrao was lean, unlike many prosperous Brahmins. As he was carried into the jungle he was not thinking principally of money. That is not the Brahmin genius; nor did he love money unduly, with what it can purchase. For that matter, Hindus far richer often have little enough in their outward circumstances to distinguish them from the decent poor.

Instead, Wamanao spent a good part of the night thinking of the heaven of Shiva Kailas, and of how he would be absorbed there in due time; yet by no means at his next death, which must be near. He had first to accomplish the cycle of births. He had considerable belief in his own merit accumulated through successive lives, which would finally bring him to blissful absorption in the deity. What would his next birth be? a question which curiously fascinates some Hindus. Old Wamanao had no reason to think that he would go downward in the scale of existence. He deserved to be born to something ever better (spiritually) than this life, which was getting to seem very beamlike at times.

They covered the fifty miles of good road; and, at a different rate, the thirty odd miles of bad road. Natives seldom travel to get through from the capital town to the sacred town in less than a round dozen of hours, which was considered to be doing very well. Very often they allowed fifteen or sixteen hours, at the rate of four miles an hour even with ponies. The best rate of bullock carts was one half of that.

Once in the early night, Wamanao called a halt for the purpose of eating the delicately cooked Brahmin food which he had brought with him in a deep copper platter tied up in a flimsy cloth. At the same time, at sufficient distance, the wild Maratha driver crumbled his *nyachani* or lunch, the cold rice and bazari meal which the humblest in those parts have twice a day in addition to two hot meals. The master's bread was of wheat, besides the cakes called poli, with *papad*, *kundai*, and other vegetarian eatings to make one's mouth water. The one meal was not vastly more expensive than the other, the chief difference consisting in the inherited skill of Brahmin women at such cooking. The servant would have eaten goat's meat when he

could get it, while the master would have taken pride in rejecting it.

With the morning complications would arise for Wamanrao about eating before he had gone through ablutions in the right quarters. A precious complication for the stricter Brahmins comes from a prohibition to eat in the course of a railway journey, which in India may well take several days. This sort of thing is of the essence of caste.

In the course of the night it rained several times, but not enough to affect the travellers.

And with sunrise they were in sight of the temples, the old-fashioned, South Indian pagodas of Lingám.

Grandiose these were, unspeakably so They seemed to rise to the sky, and to crush the earth Something of the pyramidal shape was generally preserved, though not brought to a point

Wamanrao passed several superb vistas, without more appreciation than a vague but sincere pride that these formed part of a system to which he belonged

Here, beyond an artificial pond, the waters of which rippled and gleamed deliciously at that early hour, behind and above great trees of refreshing verdure, rose a structure dreamlike but for its great solidity. The storeys mounted layer superimposed upon layer, as they rose into the air, diminishing in area, until, upon a flat space near the top, towered something, not pillared, not Grecian yet winged and graceful, with the likeness of a statue on top of that In the nearer distance, before the tonga bore them past, was the vision of a graceful woman, black and nearly naked, going up the water steps with a brimming jar poised on her head

At another angle another pagoda rose so high above the trees at its base that it seemed to inhabit the sky without background or support A dozen floors it seemed to be, placed one upon another in

diminishing oblongs. The sides as crowded as those of a Gothic cathedral, which it surpassed in size, with niches for statues, lascivious if not artistic. At the top, gigantic brickwork as it seemed, rosettes and pinnacles and spires four hundred feet in air. In the foreground of the courtyard an unusual camel was passing, girls seated, and a water carrier—for water was to seek in riverless Lingam—bearing two jars slung by a pole across his shoulder.

Other temples had the more characteristic bulbous domes. Yet others conveyed the atmosphere of the landscape on a Chinese plate. Inside these was no possibility of even one comfortable room. There was more than the possibility of weird rites of Priapus. There was no thought of the memorable beauty in every detail of the Greek temples. But in their massed effects the pagodas of Lingam were a spectacle for the gods.

They had been beautifully drawn by English artists a century ago. No wonder that when in his old age Walter Scott saw some of these drawings he felt the unsurpassable grandeur of the temples of Western India.

At Langam there were half a dozen structures, all to the glory of Shiva, which counted in the first rank. The head of each of these, though bare-footed, pulse-eating, and in flimsy robes, was a ruler of subtlety and power. Over them all, with no special temple to himself, was Hari Pant.

This was his domain. So great were the sanctity and wealth of the temples at Langam that they were a principal asset in the kingdom of Kunhala, which had seized a century before by securing them at the expense of Mysore State. Hari Pant lived with no show or luxury. Yet whenever the Maharaja or his brothers came to Lingam they prostrated themselves on the six points of their body, as the phrase goes, at full length before him

And this was the domain of Shiva. "We are in Love's land to-day." This was the Garden of Kama. This was the kingdom, as old ▬ recorded mankind, of Ishtar and of the universal Venus

Everybody had been up and around for an hour in the natty village, really a small town, adjoining. If anywhere in India smartness in dwel ings and in town planning is attained it is ▬ Cochin State and in Northern Travancore, not so very far away. And Lingam came next to some of those thrivingly sacred towns in spick-and-span neatness and the outward adornment of whitewash.

The Marathas cannot be neat if they try. It is not a part of their brilliant history and their impatiently predatory genius. But Lingam was only politically Maratha The Marathas, though in control, were here swallowed, so far as numbers went, among races even less Aryan, but possessing certain dogged qualities which they lacked.

"Drive to the house of the renegade Murali Venubai," said Wamanrao, to his now haggard driver, who had not loosed the reins throughout the night, amid all the changes of ponies

The banker, who felt his age, was desirous of discharging his errand Until this was done, he was not free to eat again or to rest. Not all his natural desire to magnify his office in the eyes of a dependant could make him take the pains to speak respectfully of his client.

The beautifully swept streets, as the ponies, with drooping heads, now paced along, were thronged with the jolly brides of Shiva.

There were anywhere from eight hundred to a thousand of them usually resident in Lingam. A great number of these were householders in the town. How good a house each of these, or two or three clubbing together, could have, depended upon their income, which was directly connected with

their looks. Many of them without any thought of shame on either side, used to send for their parents and other relatives not well off to come and share their prosperity.

Thus many of the Mudhs were now out on their morning shopping, before the business of the day began. They were of all ages, up to buxom women of forty. A good few of them carried a baby on the hip, or had a larger child hanging upon them

A note was given, to remind you how far south you here were by the red colour of the soil. There was a similar note in the duskiness, reaching to blackness, of many of the girls; and in their South Indian fashion of wearing but one garment, without any breast-jacket Many an ebon shoulder was thus gleaming, if only from its own smoothness. These girls, who were apt to form the proletariat of the temples, passed in a negative flash of white teeth and bright eyes, which together with their short but robust figures had their attraction. Not all worshippers preferred to them the beauties of the temples, Maratha and golden Nairs and even girls from the North of India, with classical features and complexions to be called fair.

The climate was far from oppressive, being essentially that of the Mysore tableland. Everything was bright and fresh and pleasant that morning. There was a fragrancy in the air so much so that the tired driver lifted his whip to more than one group of passing girls.

"Hey, Daddy!" said one girl more bold, yet salaaming respectfully, as she saw that Wamanrao was a Brahmin. "Did you meet our lovers on the road?"

"I did, my daughters," he answered jovially "heaps of them! They are coming as fast as the king's horses can bring them."

The allusion was evidently to the Raja Ram Rao,

who was well known in Lingam. From whispered remarks and titters among the girls there was a further application to his infatuation for the white Murali, to whose house, now not far, looks were directed. The prince was expected, in his great car, within a few days. But Wamanrao had by no means had the road to himself the night before. The traffic from Kanhula was incessant by night and by day The tip was notoriously expensive, but satisfying

The freemasonry in the air extended to Mussalmen so long as these walked humbly, recognising that they were in one of the head-quarters of Hinduism Many such were settled in the town, making their living in ways which would not have existed but for the temples, and on good terms with the girls All the humming prosperity of the place was bound up with the temple trade "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" was nothing to the respect which some thousands of people here felt for the source of their livelihood.

Caste practically did not exist among the Muralis, as it did not among the regular *gosains*, and other holy associations. Caste, the cardinal fact in Indian life, can therefore be swallowed up in more absorbing activities. If Venubai longed to regain her caste, and Wamanrao made much of his, those were individual matters At Lingam a larger tolerance included not only all castes but all natives of India who did not defy Shiva.

But it went no further It did not reach to Europeans nor yet their unworthy imitators, the native Christians. Let such assert themselves in Lingam and the King-Emperor's writ no longer ran there. With discretion, the globe-trotters from the hotel, two miles away, could show themselves once, hardly twice, in the streets of the town and in the outskirts of the temples. They had no open

part in the trade of the place, which seemed scandalous to them If some of the girls ogled them, others covered their faces and edged away from them.

It was the repulsion of race, a deep matter. At Lingam native dom, rather than merely Hinduism, had its focus Here it exulted in its own sense, rejoicing in its peculiar institution. A stranger intermeddled with it at his risk He could not understand, he generally came to be shocked If he came to take part in their game, so much the worse all passions were at once aflame.

So there was here the chance of a blind combination of several native creeds against the intruding European. It is amazing how Asiatics, mutually repellent, can gather together, like creatures of the field, and fall, against someone more alien

There were around Lingam, many coquettishly neat little bungalows, nothing less Save that they had a white gate outside, none like that of an English cottage, instead of a driveway to the front door, they would have made desirable dwellings for Europeans. It did not imply much income to occupy one of these; since the occupants lived crowded in native fashion The houses, pretty outside and inside, were filled with half-naked people, who spent little on their food and positively preferred to be without furniture.

One of the prettiest was occupied by Venubai, whose means were really large.

In her capacity as a former Murali no convention or propriety existed for her in regard to hours of calling Now that she had fallen from that status she need still less be consulted. But she was glad to see her man of business without, thinking of the hour.

"Have you brought the deed of gift ?" she asked in gentle, musical tones, at the same time making

the deep obeisance which she owed to a Brahmin, even though in her employ.

"I have," he answered gruffly, "here it is."

Not all his disposition to toady to his employer could overcome his scorn for her Barely restraining an audible sniff, he stepped across her threshold and seated himself cross-legged on a bright rug which Venubai spread for him on the earthen floor of her front room. Even for coming so far within the dwelling of such as she had become, he would have to perform minor penance But no dealings with the real Muralis outside could have defiled him

He took out an inkpot and a great native reed pen, dreaded instrument of sprinkling over carpets. From another quarter he took out a roll of brown paper, of the quality used in England by grocers. It was stamped, however, and covered with a scribble in Modi the debased script of Marathi.

"Here it is," he repeated, "the document you asked for. It will be of no use, since it is not legally binding However, I have obeyed orders."

"You have done well," answered Venubai. "I know that my daughter is not of age to sign away her property. But she loves me, and will do what she can to please me. Nari Pant thought that such a paper would be better than none at all."

"He ought to know. And I honour you in so far as you wish to atone for the error of your life by returning to the temples of the god the wealth which, in a way, came from them"

"That is how I feel," she answered, pleased, yet troubled. "If I had not been a Murali I would not have met the late Senapati Sahib, who tempted me to abjure my profession and become his wife according to the law of the Christians. I take shame now to think of it. Yet, if I can bring back to Mahadeo the fortune standing in the name of my daughter, I may be restored and Nila admitted as a Murali."

"It will be a good work done. We will all stretch a point to help bring it about. That is the utmost that you can expect, but if you are received back to your former standing as a Murali, and the fellowship of your caste people. It is more than you deserve, truly speaking."

"I know it is," she said humbly. "Help me, and there will be any bonus you care to accept. Also, the charge of the estates need not depart from your household, though they do belong to Mahadeo's temples."

"It may be. I am not of the priestly class, nor their friend. Hari Pant may choose to do his own managing, once he gets the estates. In this matter he represents the god, though I do not care for him personally."

But Vembai's soft eyes glowed with a light which showed how much she cared for the chief priest.

"This, then," continued Wamanrao, "is the document which you have commanded, and which Hari Pant considers worth having. Observe that even if signed by your daughter it is not of certain value. The English are not like ourselves in such matters. It can show at the most her good will, and her intention when she comes of age. She is already of full age to dedicate herself to the god, but not to alienate property. Yet supposing she will not sign?"

"Such a calamity is not in my thoughts. She is a good daughter, and knows my desire."

"Mahadeo grant it! Is the girl Nilabai in the room?"

He peered about; for the room was less bright than the road outside. His eyes were getting dim, and Betty Stuart stood in an inner doorway. Yet he could make out that there were two beautiful women present.

When he had seen so much, and that Betty had

salaamed less deeply than her mother he dipped his pen two inches into the ink-pot and quite purposelessly sprinkled the ink over the mat

"If she refuses to sign," he declared, "and were my child, which God forbid! I know what I would do to make her For this is a work of religion, in which all must assist But I would scorn to have a daughter of that size in my house, neither married nor a bride of the god."

Venubai took the reproach meekly, for the situation was one which she herself most of all felt. Something had to be done with Betty Stuart, and that quickly As she stood, she was an excrescence in a Hindu home, an unthinkable scandal

"If you will be pleased to read the deed gift?" she hinted.

"I shall be pleased, for I need rest and food. Let her come up within hearing, and be seated, with yourself, while I read"

The two women seated themselves on the floor, at a respectful distance from the Brahmin, or his pen.

Furniture there was none As Colonel Wilks wrote more than a hundred years ago: "To persons whose habitual seat is exactly that of an Englishe tailor, a chair is a useless annoyance" If a chair, when offered by a superior has since acquired some ceremonial importance, the words remain nearly as true as ever.

Even the Greeks of Homer, three thousand years ago, had an appreciation of chairs, tables, bedsteads. So far as needs constitute civilisation, they were therefore more civilised, or at least more like modern Europeans, than are the Indians of to-day, who do not run even to cushions to sit upon.

Wamanrao picked up the paper, rolled it and unrolled it, hemmed and hawed, making those ghastly noises in his throat which English people

boast of being free from. If he had had his morning ablutions and food he might have been a less unpleasant old gentleman.

"Listen!" he declared. "This is what the girl who is not even a bride of the god (but that is a highly honourable standing compared to being, as she is, unmated and without a chance of marriage) is to sign for the good of all concerned."

He lifted his brass spectacles from his nose and put them on again. Then he proceeded to mumble rather than to read aloud, with many a quiver and interjected hum! as he skipped portions of the lengthy document not supposed to be of importance. What she did hear, conveyed little to Betty Stuart, down whose cinnamon nose, faultless in shape, a tear was trickling.

"I, Nilabai . . . commonly called . . . do make over to Hari Pant . . . in trust for the temples of Mahadeo at Tangam . . . all my property . . . consisting of the following items:"

Venubai, as she sat there well pleased, might have justified the feeling of her mother Mathabai, that she was even handsomer than her child.

It is not often in Europe that the woman of thirty-six, to whom life has been easy, can claim to have lost nothing with the years, to be positively a finer physical specimen than when younger. This can be claimed much less often in India. Yet Venubai could claim it.

"Item," droned the agent. "Imam, rents of the hamlet of Karwar, with the garden of palms adjoining, averaging four hundred rupees."

She was plump and sleek in all respects. No austerities had ever worn down Venubai's delicate if not fair flesh. For this was no Hindu widow. She had not the right to practise the austerities in which many such take pride, and to which many others are compelled. It would have been the

highest presumption in her to think of such a thing. Bertrand Stuart's widow was no widow whom the Hindu system of things could recognise. Even if restored to Hinduism, as she was in part, she became again a Murali, a bride of Shiva, such as she sought to make her daughter. And how could the immortal have a widow?

So for her there was no shaven crown, no puttering of many prayers, no single meal a day and that of leavings, no single garment and that a coarse white one. Such practices, which she sincerely respected while she could not have endured them for a week, were not for the likes of her, the maids of heaven, the companions and the rewards of princes.

Venubai therefore rose not at three or four in the morning, as millions of Hindu women not widows have to do, but slept easily until the clear light preceding sunrise. She fairly loved such late sleep as is convenient in India. If only from her dozen years with Bertrand Stuart, which were now troubling her, she kept an inordinate fondness for baths even at Lingam, where water is expensive. Her cookery, much of it from her own hands, was delicate, running at times to the meats allowed to Marathas, which are nearly all, except beef. In the matter of household service a practical retribution arose, just result of her years of apostacy among Christians. For men and women of her own caste, a swagger grade of the Marathas, who have several grades, disliked taking service with her for fear of pollution.

Only in respect of the single garment allowed to widows could Venubai be said at this moment to conform. As oftentimes in the privacy of the house, she and her daughter had both laid aside the second garment, or rather had not put it on that morning. In either case the sari, when held a little tightly, was raiment sufficient for the climate and for modesty.

"Item," the agent went on. "Jaghir, the arable lands of the villages of Lampi Hampi Dampi so many bighas. Humph! what do women understand?"

Vembai at least, if not the young girl, who was unawakened and who seemed lumpish this morning, understood how to love

It was love which made the mother seem so young Love had kindled the fond light in her eyes, and the expectation of being loved after long pining accounted for the satisfied smiles in the dimples of her full face

This had led her to wash and adorn herself daintily just before, despite the single garment. This was of silk in shimmering purples running into the reds of the fascinating *anjir* colour, that of a fig when it is broken open

Vembai frankly could not resist silks, though she did not as yet allow them to her daughter.

"Do your duty, my pet," she would say to Betty, "Take the leap which you fear without reason to take. Throw yourself into the stream where you belong, swimming among the other fishes unafraid. It was not my life as a Murali which ever made trouble for me, but the ceasing to be one Become a matronly bride of the god and the chestsful of rare silk saris which your worshippers will come bringing to you!"

Indian women have so little to rejoice in personally except, where their standing allows it, fine raiment laid away against moth and rust in great chests, to be taken out on occasions, inspected and gloated upon!

What did the dainty would do without silks to play with until the monks of Justinian (when playing time was nearly over) brought the mystery from China? The true classic times had known but the inferior Coan silks which are seldom mentioned,

spun by the silkworms of the pine, oak and ash trees.

"Item, jaghir," growled the banker man. "Shame that such wealth should be bestowed by our orthodox Maharaja upon an unclean foreign mercenary like E-Stuart Sahib I bet you are not listening, yet it is all for the benefit of the great god. Jaghir, I say, good building land outside Kanhala . . so many bighas, occupied by twenty European bungalows paying rent at this moment . . so much . . too much for you!"

So it was true. Some score of ladies in Kanhala, within and without station society, who would have treated Betty Stuart with righteous scorn, who hardly knew what a Munsh was and who would have shrieked with horror had it been explained to them, were her tenants!

It was also true that she did not need half the property which stood in her name. With a faithful heart to love her, she would have been content to pass away the golden days (could but the right surroundings be found) upon the quarter or the tenth part of her possessions.

Vembai was gracefully, sufficiently clad in her one garment which scissors or needle had never touched, with its peculiarly rich fringe of open-work. The purple was well set off against the gleam of not too much gold She was far beyond the rudeness of wishing to be her own banker in this respect. She had some natural taste, which had been improved by years of intimacy with an educated European Her religious feelings did not prevent her seeing that Indian gold ornaments tend to be heavy and inartistic.

So, for her, no more than the shells of what such ornaments are in many cases. Yet she wore them in four or five places. The anklets at her bare feet bore tiny bells, which gave forth an occasional music

pleasant when it was not bizarre Both toes and fingers had rings, yet not so many as they were capable of carrying. Vembu had not at this time any sort of zone But her plump arms bore armlets, and there was a necklace out of sight. She was not without jewels, emeralds and diamonds, yet those were chiefly upon the hidden necklace.

"Item," grumbled the Brahmin as he read. "So many shares, so much at par . . worth so much now . . in the Raja Amir Rao's Syndicate Emeralds Limited, London What do you understand of Vilayat?"

But the gems did not come from Vilayat, though some of the speculation did. Vembu understood this time and was interested enough to stretch one hand so that the morning sunlight might throw green flashes about her This was tangible this was worth while, to have a part in the mountain mines, not so far away, where slaves toiled under the earth, in unearthly conditions of darkness, to extract her toys. She was keen as a child at this sport she could not resist the flash of jewels

Young Betty, too, lighted up at the sight of the playthings she was not allowed to use She loved at least to watch them upon her mother, in whose beauty she took a whole-hearted delight Dear and gentle and kind she had always found this mother, save as latterly warped by religion But why she herself must not wear necklaces or emeralds she as little understood as some young English girls the prohibition of diamonds.

It may be mentioned that Vembu did not practise her former profession. Complications and local jealousies were in any case thus avoided. But she was the worse, not the better regarded for this abstention. The Muras of Lingam, who would have been aflame had she taken away a few of their lovers, tossed their heads at her as one who scorned

them and the service of Mahadeo. They were immensely interested in the white Murali, her daughter, of whom they were also prepared to be jealous.

"She attends the temple services seldom," such was the common chatter in Lingam about Betty, "and with such an air that one can see she is unwilling. She is at heart still a *Christ*. She will not keep company with us, though her mother asks nothing better than to be one of us again. She has reached an age at which it is a disgrace to be neither one thing nor the other. She is due to the god, and overdue. The fame of her already brings custom hither. It is said that she would like to escape with her wealth to her Feringhi father's people, and her former life. We will see that she does not! That would bring Mahadeo's anger upon us. Yet she must romp in ahead of us, bewitching a king's son with the fair skin which intoxicates our men."

Thus Venubai was not unpopular in Lingam, while her daughter was. The mother was no fury or fanatic. What she sought to do seemed but natural and right to the average Hindu.

It was true that she wished to press her daughter's body into the mud in order that it might serve as a stepping-stone for herself back into Hinduism. To regularise the position of both was worth some outrage to the feelings of a puling girl. Conversions do not hold; things must draw back again to their origins, as the tide into the boundless main from which it flew.

But in the minds of Hindus there could be no thought of the mud, or of degradation for Betty. On this subject, as on some others, their view is as inverted as that of the fly walking on the ceiling.

Venubai and Betty sat side by side, cross-legged, on a sheet spread in the centre of the floor in lieu of a carpet. Nothing was lacking in the room which

Hindu ideas of comfort demanded. The space adjoining the walls had been that morning decorated in a not unpleasing pattern formed by powders of several colours. There was actually a small table. Niches in the walls were occupied by little images of Shiva and of minor gods with fresh garlands before them. The total effect was but bleak.

The two women alone were worth looking at. Venibai, though tall for a Maratha woman, had not the height which Betty derived from her father. Instead of her mother's delicate adornment she had—and this she thought very hard indeed—but virginal attire.

"When can I dress as you do, mother?" she often asked.

"When you have accepted my former life, my darling. When you have the god for a husband, and when I have the pride of feeling that my girlie is a Munah, continuing my work."

"That can never be. Oh, what would Daddy have said, to see me brought to this?"

"It would not have been, had he lived, who was a good man in his day. Fate is in it, which I cannot understand, save that we must get back to our own people."

"Your people, mother, forgive me for saying it. If they were all like dear Ajabai who has just left us! But half my blood and all my training are other than yours. They call out for the life of Vilayat, whence Daddy came."

"You are not fit for it, Nilya. There is no white woman, however humble, who would not despise you, shame that it should be so! Such is the evil in mixtures. Do not rob me of my child."

At this point in these talks, which went very much in a groove, Betty often began to cry softly.

"I love you, *aie* [mother], as you have truly loved me. But never will I take to the life around me here."

Little as Betty understood, she saw the essentials, and could distinguish between right and wrong For her the merry temple girls meant corruption.

"You will not be as the girls you see, but on another plane I will see to that– as will someone else, the best friend you have."

At this reference Betty would shake her head

"It comes to the same thing Never will I be the bride of Shiva!"

"Ah yes, you will, my pet, as easily as the waters flow down hill. A child means more to one of us lonely women than to those who are married It was my fault ever to leave Mahadeo's fold When we are safely back in it you will found with me a family of Muralis who shall be famous for generations! Let us be companions. Then I will delight to deck you for your duties, arraying you in such garments as these, and better What, in comparison to comforting your mother's heart, is the money which came from your father?"

"Yes, what is the money? That is not the thing."

"From the service of the god it came, and to him let it return."

"With all my heart, *aie*, if so I do not have to go with it!"

Such conversations had gradually become sharper in tone, degenerating into disputes.

To do both mother and daughter justice, neither cared much for money in itself. Betty was too ignorant of what it meant. Venuba had a clearer head than most native women for financial details. She had guarded her pension as a major's widow, and had other savings of her own apart from Betty's fortune. To her money had always been too easily come by to be of great importance It was not for herself that she wanted her daughter's money now, but for a larger purpose, in a way impersonal, yet complications here came in.

"Take my money and let me be,' or even "let me go!" Betty at one time used to say.

But that was too simple a solution for India. Where could she go, how could she be anywhere without affecting others, an unattached girl of that scandalous size and beauty, in a land where everyone belongs to someone must fit into a category, and where even the courtesan has a husband, if only a plant?

As Betty and her mother sat together, half-listening to the droning of the agent, they were contrasted in more than in dress.

Betty wore cotton for silk, glass and silver ornaments for gold and gems. Her single garment was of a dark red. It had cost a very few rupees, while her mother's sari was worth ten times as much. Betty's garment was such as the servants in the house wore, or any poor man's wife. She had spent some time thinking how much better crimson, approaching rose colour, would have become her skin, but crimson saris are not made in that grade. No matter, the dark red was also becoming. It framed a face less full and less dark than her mother's. Venubai was of an unmistakable brown, and that not a light shade. Betty's colour could best be described by the word which her lover had hit upon after much consideration.

To know just how witching a cinnamon face can be you would have had to see Betty Stuart's at another time. It was blotched with recent tears, and the corners of the admirable mouth went down. She was not in the way of showing any dimples to-day.

No wonder that the mother looked the better pleased as well as better dressed. Her plans and wishes were coming to a fruition; while Betty was up against a stone wall, which she did not altogether realise.

"I would give anything in the wide world to be dressed as my mother is," she was thinking, and she thought in Marathi "I would give the old fortune from Daddy which this fool is prosing about, with his items and jaghirs It never did me any good. But I will not agree that we should be two Muralis here together, as mother wishes And the two things seem to go together, the giving up the money and the giving myself to the god This is the Guru's contrivance, and is too deep for me He leads mother by the nose ring. The worst of it is that I do not dislike Hari Pant myself when I am with him, and that I cannot resist him It is time for something to happen Oh, I wonder if Edgar has had the message from Ajabai, and what he will do about it?"

Come on a hippogriff and fly out of the little window with her to fairyland, about which she had read much until four years ago —that was as practical thought as she had.

In truth, Venubai no more wore the rather grotesquely disfiguring nose-ring than her daughter did. That is the token of the humdrum but intensely respectable Hindu wife, content to keep her house and do her spinning. The noses of these two had never been pierced.

Very correct noses they were Venubai's nose was somewhat more than straight, curving to a slight aquiline, as is not uncommon in India. Her eyes were black, with capacity for fire of several sorts. She had given her daughter the long lashes which are an abiding trait of good looks. But Betty's eyes were only a dark brown. The hair of both was dead black, brushed back beneath the end of the sari, and glossy.

The Maratha mother and the Eurasian daughter made a telling picture in their resemblances and their contrasts. To speak of Betty as the White Murali

was really absurd, as even Wamanrao had reflected on beholding her. She was no more white than some natives are The phrase, which was widely used, could only refer to a comparative fairness, with intention to titillate the Indian longing for a white skin, and perhaps to insult the conquerors of the land

Both women had been listening with less attention as Wamanrao reached, with a sort of satisfaction, the last sheet of his brown paper roll

"Item, main," he sneezed. "Outside Naroli, by the great sea, certain building grounds for European dwellings . highly desirable if developed . . at present only one bungalow there, let on long lease."

How little the young women knew, even their agent did not remember, that these were the promises of an obscure Mission, which had just received a knock-out blow in its first round with Shiva This was the stricken home of Mrs. Sinler, who had heard even of Betty, and who wished to help her, but who was in a native prison At Langam, too, everybody had heard with exultation the evening before, of her condemnation.

"Other items concerning the same inam cannot matter," Wamanrao concluded, boldly skipping half a page. "The reading is completed."

There were sighs of genuine relief in three different tones, gruff, exultant apprehensive.

He showed his fangs; and the women such perfect sets of teeth as in Europe would have made it certain they were artificial.

"*Hari, hari, Mahadeo*" cried Venubai, falling into the old Maratha war-cry, which showed that she was combatant. It became evident that her forehead was smeared with the paint of the god, while Betty's was not "Now for the ink for her to sign with for my Nilva can sign in two languages."

"In a moment, *bai*. The fortune is here totalled; it has not dwindled while in our charge So many lakhs . . so many thousands"

He mumbled over the sums which made up the property, not capitalised, but reckoned by the income rendered For India, where no fortunes are excessive, here was far more than enough to "make two lovers happy"

"I warn you," he said, "that the greater part of this property consists of grants from the State, which are not quite like ordinary possessions, but are liable to be resumed after a moderate period, or perhaps a century, by the authority which conferred them The Kanhala Residency also holds a sort of watching brief, which is a nuisance for both sides, over the interests of the owner, in consideration of her late father. The property is therefore not so solid and tangible as it may seem It is thus the best thing for all concerned to put the fortune into the hands of the god, where neither Residency can interfere nor Maharaja confiscate"

So much was all one to Betty and her mother

"This is the place to sign Here, below the words 'I have heard this document read and explained, and consent to it. Made over to Mahadeo's temples at Lingam.' Your usual signature, *bai*, in Marathi if you please, to agree with the rest of the document. I can act as witness if you will sign now."

He dipped his reed pen as far as before into the ink-bottle; then, in the same aimless way, slung the ink in a semicircle all about him It sprinkled the red sari and the purple, hardly noticed Under no circumstances would these women have been quick to take up, or to criticise, a Brahmin, albeit not a priestly one, in the exercise of his duties.

"Take the paper on your knee, Nilya," said Venubai, "and make the most important signature of your life."

"I don't think I shall do it dear mother," said Betty in a gentle voice.

"Of course you will, my lamb. Like a good girl, sign the paper which will shuffle off a load of canes, which will be reparation for our sins, which will make us good Hindus."

"That is one reason why I shall not sign. I am, and I prefer to be, *are*, a Christian."

"Impossible delusion. You cannot mean what you say. Sign the little paper my dove, and open the way for us both to the temple."

"That is it,' said Betty with determination "I refuse the road to the temples."

"What!" cried her mother, springing to her feet, "you will not be the bride of Shiva?"

"I will not be the bride of Shiva."

"Not to be two happy Munalis together, at the head of the profession, with young children for me to lean on as I grow old, and with nothing to fear to the end of our days?"

"I know little, but I know that is not right, and I reject it."

"O benighted, abandoned, ungrateful girl!"

But Wamanrao was at the end of his tether in every respect. He had gathered up his inkpot and pen, and was trying to settle the loosened turban on his head.

"I cannot listen to such blasphemy," he scolded. "That my ears should hear the road to the temples," and the bridal child gasped, rejected! It serves me right for having entered such an irregular house. You, woman, brought about the situation by your apostacy in the first place. Now you have a daughter who prefers the Christian way. But I'll clear out of it; I'll have nothing more to do with you. We don't want the management of the property, wherever it goes. I was going to have the deed of donation signed in my presence, as a

favour to you. But take your precious document, sign it or not as you please What have I to do with your quarrels? I am defiled by being in such a place. *Balalay*; I am defiled, defiled—also very tired—but polluted by being here.'

The women had made no such noise as he did.

He flung the document at the feet of Vanubai, who was frightened at what was happening. From force of habit she followed him to the door, salaaming respectfully.

He hastened away to a house of his caste people, where he could have, if not a wash-up, at least the water required for the ceremonial ablutions imperative after the company he had been keeping, and before he could take the food he needed.

Nec vi pellimur e tumulo nec e cubili
HORACE
(No evening bell nor wail around for tender limb)

MOTHER and daughter stood at their entrance door, watching the agent's tonga as it clattered down the pleasant little street.

"He will come no more this way," said Venuba.

"I'm sure he is not wanted," the daughter added; "horrid old smutty thing, who has inked my sari," at which she could glance down ruefully even at this moment.

"My garment is worse sprinkled. But you would not put the ink to the paper, beloved!"

Venuba laughed gently, trying to turn over the disobedience to prettiness; for there was much tenderness between the two.

"Ah, that I cannot do," said Betty, unable to laugh. "Why did Wamanrao come here from Kahala?"

"He came because I summoned him. Though he is but a secular Brahmin, and like any other man in a matter of business, it was not well to anger him. No Brahmin's ill-will is desirable."

Betty said nothing; and the two stood in the doorway for a little. The morning air made them hold tightly about their throats the single garment which was also drawn over their heads.

A comely pair, anyone would have said. Hardly two sisters, for there were the twenty years between them. Those with the invincible preference for

youth would have been bound to prefer Betty, though the freshness of her face was clouded

She was the taller, and the less ample in form, though a large girl As they stood, their hands were seen to be delicately kept, small and plump, with taper fingers The colour was not the same, though there was less difference than in their faces. Betty's hands were in the state of nature, to her own regret. Her mother's were henned in moderation, and showed the red gleam of henna on the nails.

Their feet, as they peeped mouselike from beneath the heavy folds of the sari, were also small and well-shaped. Both showed toe-rings, in one case of silver and in the other of gold.

Venubai's face was not hard, as one might have expected it to be. Gentle and kindly it seemed, though the happiness upon it was lessened by apprehension. Her roaring days had been before she was twenty, and had left no outward trace Her life with Major Stuart, and the years of respectable seclusion in sacred Lingam, would seem to have appeased the longing for many loves, "mutable loves and light of wing." It was not the renewal of such a life, though her religion enjoined it for her, that she now desired. Her thoughts were bent upon one only.

Venubai was a law unto herself, being unclassed, in such details as the henna and the touch of paint, not disfiguring, on her low forehead. Betty's forehead was less low, though this is a fault which few Indian women escape.

Betty's mother was not as little Yamuna's adopted mother at Naroli, retired in due course after faithful service Venubai had brought herself and her daughter into their irregular, though not identical, positions. This is a hard world, and perhaps most so in India, for those not in a quite definite niche

So far from wishing to be a bad mother, Venubai wished to do the very best thing she could for Betty. By all the lights of the Hindu world, this was the very thing which was now under way. To regularise themselves as *nautch*, by any means to fall into a place in the procession instead of remaining a forlorn outsider, that was the crying need.

For Betty as she was there was no outlet, no future in her mother's house or in any other. She it was who was looked upon askance for her alien ways and her haughty mien, as it seemed. She was the cause of scandal by her mere existence, and now, as it seemed, by her unready attitude. Her mother, on the contrary, was regarded as a worthy soul who had suffered severely for the error of her youth and who sought to return to the fold bringing large advantages to the temples.

These feelings were reflected in the greetings which passed while the women stood at their threshold. The maids of Shiva salaamed cordially, if with no special respect, to Venubai.

"It is not *her* fault any longer," they said or thought. "She asks nothing better than to be among us again so soon as it is allowed. She is still so handsome that we shall have to look to our charms. But we are not jealous in our line—not of those of our own sort. It is the upstart daughter with her paling face, undoubtedly fairer than the lightest of us, who is enough to make us all jealous. Let her be brought to shame in any way possible, the quicker the better! She seems to count the Raja Ram Rao's love for shame, so let him punish her! How she stood there with fallen face, aloof, scarcely returning our salaams!"

Langam was the city of free love, if not altogether of free manners. The married women here, who were a thousand or two, lived just as respectably as in any other place. Yet the spirit of the temples

was in the air. There was little seclusion for married women or for brides. No one stirred so little abroad as Venubai the former fearer, who was beginning to suffer for lack of exercise. It was her misfortune, which she was determined to put an end to, that she represented no one but herself.

For the rest, the women of Lingam moved freely about the streets and the outskirts, unveiled save in the case of a rare Mussalmani of pretensions which were here apt to be resented. They did not go very far. Indian women are not walkers—save in the case of village women who can trudge their thirty miles a day, and who are sometimes employed as messengers or carriers.

Betty Stuart shared in this general freedom of movement. She could walk unquestioned, and in fact without any fear of insult, about and outside the little town with its red streets and its great trees of pleasantly contrasting green; few palms grew here. Her virginal garb showed that she was not of those who can be spoken to; and Hindu men are not without manners.

Still more evident was it that Betty, with her free movements and her frank countenance, her unringed nose, was no possible sort of married woman, and in no groove that could lead to marriage. Even as a matter of age, such hopes would have had to be put aside about the time that she came to Lingam, at twelve.

Everybody knew her by sight; knew her story. She was an admitted anomaly, an exception to all rules. It did much to secure tolerance for her yet a little longer that her income was known to have gone to the temples, whether legally or not, during these four years. But every exception tends to extinguish itself. Betty could not delay any longer to give herself and her fortune to the god who was so rooted in the interests and the desires of all.

"The religion of the Jews is stern forbidding excess, therefore now as in the days of Solomon, will the common herd turn gladly to the god in whose worship they find pleasure, lust, and the excitement of the senses."

Betty was a public institution at Lingam nothing less. Therefore for the public good she could not be allowed to swerve from the expected path. There were also private desires on the part of many who had marked her beauty with kindling eyes. For the present, for a little longer she was taboo, being under the peculiar protection of Hari Pant, who guided the affairs of the temple so well. Thenceforward she would be open to all Indian lovers, a source of both pleasure and profit.

So she had been still allowed to walk unrestrained on the shaded roads which led to Lingam from several directions, and in the pleasant banyan groves of the neighbourhood. No companion was usually with her; indeed her habits were more active than those of native women. She had no friends; and her mother, whose companionship had been so close, was ceasing to be the companion of her choice.

Up to four months ago Betty, as she walked barefooted and gave a rein to her fancies, used to imagine all sorts of heroic lovers magnified from her English reading. The legends of Kamadeva too, and of Prince Krishna the human god, "the amorous blue-throated Krishna," were also present. Yet these last seemed neither real nor quite cleanly and attractive. Betty shared the disabilities of all Eurasians in the double stream which flowed through her, and in the often divergent desires. Yet she was far more European in her mind and in her feelings than in her costume or complexion.

From the previous March her dreams had not

lacked a focus. She had met Dr. Fulton but once for an hour or two. He had made no particular impression upon her. Yet she had thought of him ever since, more and more

He was a comely fellow, if not quite a youth being about twice her years She remembered that he had gentle brown eyes, like her own He had been sorry for her situation, had told her to send for him if her troubles increased and if she thought he could be of any use. Of what use could he be except by marrying her?—and this heaven and earth would oppose

She used to recall how he had tried to kiss her. She wished now that she had allowed it. He had treated her prettily, had been protecting and kind, and so obviously smitten by her personality—the only man in whom she had been able to watch this effect.

Betty's troubles had steadily increased, like those of the young elephant unwilling to enter the pen, yet finding the walls approaching nearer on either side, leading to an inevitable issue.

Europeans were not altogether unknown to Betty. She considered that her father had been the handsomest of them all. She often watched from the doorway where she was now standing, though this was not encouraged, the globe-trotters from Connell's hotel, disguised in mushroom sun topees, driving past to inspect such of the outer beauties of Lingam, architectural and feminine, as were permitted to their profaning gaze. They sometimes saw her, and had thus helped to spread the legend of her fair good looks. But they were not wanted at all in this abode of nativedom. Betty shared the feeling that their intrusions were in bad taste.

Yet other Sahibs she had spoken with; but not with Fulton, who had taught her to call him Edgar. Whom could she think of as a sole lover,

a husband, in distinction from the fate which lay before her, if not of him?

If ever she attained to marriage, which was the light in which she had come to regard the question, it could only be with him. Anyone she married, apart from Shiva, would have to be either a European, a native, or a Eurasian. Whether rightly or wrongly, Betty did not care for native men, specially as she saw them in Lingum. She also thought that she would not like any Eurasian for the purpose although aware that she was one herself. About the only Eurasian she had known was her excellent instructress, Miss Hilda Walpole, the governess of the little Rams at Kunhalt.

The recent visit of Muthabai had been memorable for Betty. Here was one who, though an obstinate Hindu, had yet lived within the Christian atmosphere and assimilated something of it. Betty at once found her grandmother more sympathetic, though not more loving, than her mother.

The battered old woman, with her inconsistencies, untaught, could not hold with the sacrifice of a grown girl to Shiva against her own will. Not for any considerations would she agree to this. She had a natural uprightness in the matter which set her alongside Betty and against Vembai. There was reason enough why the visit had not passed too happily.

Betty, who had never said a word to her mother about Fulton, had just mentioned him to her grandmother. At the end she entrusted her with the message which had been blindly but faithfully delivered. Muthabai felt that by so doing, as well as by protesting to her daughter against Betty's dedication to the god, she had discharged her own soul. After this things must come out as they could, being in the hands of fate.

Naturally, since the message had gone off, a few

days before, Fulton had been more than ever in Betty's thoughts. She thought of him continually, ■ she was doing now while she stood at her mother's side on the threshold.

"Has my grandma met Edgar Sahib already?" she pondered. "And has she given my message correctly? And was it immodest or unmaidenly in me to send it? In this country it can only mean an invitation to him to come and take me What did he think of it? But, above all, did Edgar honour my message? Is he on his way to deliver me from all this business of Shiva which is a horror to me? For if he does not come, Ram Rao will"

She gave an involuntary shudder as she recalled the satyr-like face, prognathous, only once seen, of the young prince, the most disreputable of his tribe, who was notoriously seeking her

"You are chilled in the morning breeze; come inside, my love," said Venubai, shutting the door.

"Oh, what shall I do if none but the devourer comes?" Betty was thinking as she followed her mother within. "But the Raja will not come until Hari Pant sends him word to do so, and I have heard the Guru say that the deed of donation must be signed first. Therefore must I be firm, and not sign it. When will Edgar come?"

She knew nothing, as she longed for her lover, of his standing or lack of standing; how his inches simply were not up to such an enterprise; nor how he was even now on the road, having left Kanhala the night before, a nuisance and a derision to his superiors. Mathabai was much better informed as to his true position in the world.

"Come along, daughter mine, let ■ sign this paper and have it out of the way."

"I have told you, *ma*, that I will not sign it."

"Ah yes, you will, little girl. Fetch your own ink and pen from the niche. Here is the paper sign it on your knee. I will be one witness, and we can send out for another."

"What is the use of all that, if I am not going to sign?"

"There is no such thing as not going to where the Guru is concerned. I wanted to have this signed before Hari Pant came, to do him a pleasure. But you will sign then, if not before."

"True, I cannot resist the Guru," Betty replied sombrely. "If he makes me sign it is even as the decrees of fate, and there is no help for it. But short of that I will not sign."

"And you will not make your little signature to give your mother pleasure? You were not wont to be so obstinate."

"I do not love to cross you, believe me *aie*."

"Nor did you ever do so in little things. Only now, in something of supreme importance."

"That is the reason, can you not see?"

Venubai could not see it, though she still restrained herself. The two handsome women offered a dramatic spectacle as they stood opposite each other, speaking with increasing animation, though as yet, gently, dark eyes flashing, their garments fallen back from plump arms and shoulders. There had been between them a great fund of affection, which was not yet exhausted.

"It is no light thing," Betty continued, "to sign away in a moment all the property which dear Daddy acquired and left to me. He might think that we disregard his labours and his wishes. Yet the money is the least thing. Neither you nor I think of it in the first place."

"That is true, Nilya. It is not the money that matters."

"It is not the money that matters, but the mode of life. I cannot accept your mode."

"You cannot, presumptuous that you are, when you have come out of it, when you have known none other?"

"Ah, yes, I have known another mode of life, as yours was my mother, when you lived virtuous beside Daddy making his happiness Even here your life has been regular, and beyond reproach till now."

"For seventeen years, my lamb, chiefly because of you, have I lived an irregular life, scorned of Hindus, neither Murah nor married, uncasted."

"Caste, caste! How much one hears of it "

"You, who have never known it, may speak like that The guardians of caste do well to maintain its rules with severity. But oh, the satisfaction that trickles to one's finger tips when one knows that one is correct in this respect, and that no caste-fellow can look down on one"

"You make too much of it, mother, I feel sure you do. The priests impose upon you, knowing that you may be the means of bringing them much money. As a Murah you were absolved from caste."

"That is true. But there is something wrong with my standing. It hurt me that when my mother was lately here she would not eat with me."

Betty could even laugh at the recollection.

"No more would she eat with me. How stiff an old Maratha can be on such a point! Ajabai does not cook as well as you, perhaps because she has never had as good materials I used to eat the dishes she prepared for me, but it had to be at a distance. Dear grandma! I can see her on her heels in a corner, over her own fireplace."

Almost she felt disloyal in making even this

criticism of the relative with whom she had had some sympathetic intercourse. Betty also longed, as did her mother, to put off unpleasantness the decision that was coming, the conflict of wills

"So you see that caste is a real thing, daughter Consider the caste servants, too, how they will not enter this house But as to your grandma it grieves me to think of her I shall not look upon her face, a mother's face again Or yet again perhaps I shall, when as a caste woman I can invite her here without any fear for her of pollution. But meanwhile it is sad She left suddenly, after a quarrel about you, troublesome child! I know not if she had enough money for the journey"

The elements of tragedy were here Betty being so much a child, had not once thought of the question of money when parting, four or five days before, with her grandmother, who would not mention the subject An armlet or an anklet, even of silver from that house of abundance would have smoothed the road for the aged feet

More engrossing subjects had been to the front, life message, and the chance of rescue from her fate as a Murali. With the blindness of youth Betty had not reflected, as she now saw, that a better equipped messenger might have set the lover sooner on his way. Yes, she now remembered seeing Marthabai trudging away on foot without so much as a staff.

"It was too bad!" she declared, abashed. 'I ought to have asked you for money to give to Ajabai. But can you not send it after her?"

"I cannot send it so as to find her on her road where she will have most need But my mind has been eating on this subject I have already sent plenty of money to await her when she reaches Mumbai."

"I am so glad of that at least," said Betty with

the easy optimism of youth, which sometimes seems so shallow.

"But your grandma should not have encouraged you to resist me," said Venubai, recurring heavily to the undisputed fact.

"What shall I do? Where shall I turn? First let us have done with this trashy question of money, to which I cannot bear to give my mind. But I must remember that though it means little to you and me, *ai-e*, it means everything to some people. Specially to the temple priests, and to my Guru."

"He *does* love money, though he is a charming man, and a holy. If so, let him have it. You do me the justice, Nilya, to see that I wish your money only to give it away."

Betty put her hands on her mother's shoulders and gazed long, with a troubled look which tried to be penetrating, into her mother's eyes which were not insincere.

"I know you do not wish money from the base greed for it in itself. But you wish for it now, in order to smooth your path to certain objects."

Love, or the stress of sorrow, was teaching the child apperception.

"Perfectly true," assented Venubai.

"Some good people have thought a lot of money," Betty went on, thinking out her problem as she spoke. "It meant something to my Daddy. It was the reward of his hard work and faithfulness to those whose salt he ate. He hoped that it would be a safeguard to me, instead of a snare to my feet. I sometimes feel that we do not think enough of Daddy, and of his wishes in this matter."

Venubai was trying to follow, though without sympathy. "Well?"

"Now what would be his feelings if he could watch me making over the fortune which he left me

as a coat of mail in the battle of life? Would he not at least wish to know to whom it was going?'

"To whom could it go better than to Mahadeo?"

"Exactly. I'm sure Daddy, if he were now in the room, wouldn't agree to that. In fact, he would consider the temples of Shiva one of the worst objects to which anything could go. As for the idea of his daughter going there too!"

"Beware of blasphemy, child! *Hare, hare, Mahadeo!*"

'I have told you what my Daddy certainly thought. I cannot forget the education which he and Miss Walpole gave me, so far as my years allowed."

"I shared in that education, I wrote *chits* in English, I was considered quick in the uptake, I enjoyed the readings aloud from Walter Scott. Yet behold, it has all fallen away from my mind like this sari from my head."

"Not so with me, mother, though I was never quick. I suppose it all shows what the earliest impressions mean; and you were brought up for Shiva."

"So I was? Heaven be praised! Is there any greater God?"

"There is none more filthy."

Vembai's face darkened, which is the way of flushing with anger for those who have her complexion.

"Take care what you say, or the anger of the god will strike you."

"I am somewhat afraid myself, for I have lived all these years in the shadow of Shiva. The god himself is naught but it is the way of life which I dread. And, as we know, he has powerful followers, who practise sorcery."

In speaking as she did, Betty gave too much

value to her own enlightenment. The very language in which the conversation moved, Marathi, is one fitted to express admirably concerns within the four corners of a house, but admitting larger ideas with difficulty. Betty did not at all realise her ignorance, helplessness, and, in some respects, superstition. Though she had seen through the pretensions of the god, her mind was in subjection to the claims of his priests.

What she meant to say was, and this was to her credit, that she preferred to be on the side of the angels

"Humph!" said Venubai. "Are you then no better than a Christi?"

"Perhaps not. I was so young when you made me abjure the Christian faith. Women should not meddle with such matters. Yet the life which I am to lead must concern me. About this I have the Christian outlook, not the Hindu. I will be a good girl, as I was brought up. I will not be the bride of Shiva"

"You have said that about a thousand times."

"Because I mean it." She was feeling about how to express the resolution in her. "This is what I have to say about the money. Daddy might be willing to see it go to the temples if thereby he could save me from going there. That would be to save me, as a sort of ransom. Therefore take it, and let me go elsewhere."

"Fool! There is no elsewhere for you in Hind, you well know."

"There must be. Let me leave you, and experience my fate."

"Such things are not possible. You do vex me so, Nilya! Not going to the god, or to a husband, who was never thinkable for you, you destroy my *abru* well yours."

"Then in Vilayat I will seek Daddy's relatives."

"I'll take good care that you do nothing of the kind! Your father himself wished not this, or he would have provided for it To go into a land populated by scornful cold faces like those of the score or two white women, real and pretended, in Kanhala Much notice they took of you in a dozen years"

"I will do as I can, *aie*, here or there But about the money Take it as a ransom for me from the temples if you will. But never as a dowry to establish me in Langam"

The distinction was quite plain in any language Venubai had heard it; as she complained, too often.

"Daddy might be reconciled to his fortune leaving me if for such a purpose Take it and let me go But I will not sign it away except for a safe conduct away from here"

"Do you even know where you would go, mad girl?"

Betty had some thoughts on the subject, which she could not utter. She had been quite sufficiently explicit—a quality not prized in women or in children.

Venubai gazed long and tenderly at her daughter. She was alarmed for the love which had been of a peculiar tenderness between them, and wished to preserve it from fading away before her eyes in this dissension.

"You are not deceiving me, my Nilya? You are keeping nothing back?"

Betty could not meet her mother's gaze at that moment. The long lashes fell over brown eyes naturally honest.

The mother's heart conquered for the moment. Lest the love which she cherished should dissolve like some volatile essence, Venubai would not pursue her enquiries. Nothing more likely, she

thought, judging from herself, than that a strapping girl like Betty, brought up in an unnatural way should have been drawn to someone or another but of course a native This, after all, was what she wished to lead Betty to ; this sort of thing should be encouraged.

For the third time she had picked up the thick file, for such it was, of sheets fastened on a string This she let drop again to the floor.

Instead, she clasped her daughter in her arms, kissing her many times, stroking her face with great gentleness and then kissing her own finger tips. If Betty assented it was the most ; she did not respond. This was animal affection, she began to think, seeking its purpose. Venubai's little game was obvious.

"Let us sit close together, my pet," she said, wheedlingly, "and love each other as of old time. You don't seem to be my own little girl of late. Why is it that we can no longer get along together?"

She pulled Betty, unanswering, to the floor, where they sat cross-legged, side by side, against the wall

"What has come between us, my Nilya?" she crooned, petting an unresponsive soft hand.

"You wish to lead me to a wrong life as I must needs think."

"Not so! Not so! Toba! God forbid!"

"It does not seem wrong to you, *aie*, and that alone shows how far apart we are. What would Daddy have said to your plans for me?"

"Now don't talk of your father any more, Nilya He was all right while he lived, and I did not question his strange ideas. He was a handsome man, and I went to him in the way of love, which did not really excuse me. For he broke my career as a Murali, and got me into trouble with my religion."

"A good thing, I should think"

"Toba again! Beware how you talk, child, or you will get us both into fresh trouble. Here, so close to the temples! Shiva's priests are famous for their *jadu*, their magic, whereby they read our hearts and bring things to pass in unexpected ways. Who is a stronger *jadugir* than Hari Pant?"

"I know he is a great magician. What frightens me about him is that I cannot resist him or dislike him."

"You'd better not try to! Then since the Guru holds the keys to admit us into our religion again, since he can enter inside our minds and make us do what he wills, let us carry out his wishes in this little matter of the money. There is plenty more where this came from, in the lusts of men."*"

"No, that is not the way to speak of Daddy's money, made by honest work."

"You let your Daddy be, Nilya, can't you? I have nothing to say against him. But time was when a lover once departed could be out of mind. I love another now."

"Yes, I know you love Hari Pant; nor do I reproach you for it."

Betty would not have presumed to judge her mother's life or affections; and in regard to the Guru in particular she was bewitched. She was incapable of pertness, which is the smartness of the gutter. She claimed no more than to be her own mistress in vital matters.

"Is not the Guru a man to be loved?" cooed Venubai, vastly pleased. "I am glad that you see it. But he will not be my lover until this matter of the money is settled."

The talk always came round thus in a circle. Venubai's attitude was not merely selfish. It did not look so to her. Yet it was capable of seeming so.

"Take the money, as I keep saying, dear mother, and let me go free"

"Again and again! Things are not so simple as that, child. Everything is of a piece, or tied together somehow. As to letting you go, now? Do you think I could spare you, Nilya mine? We have meant far too much to each other. You are dearer to me than any daughter born in marriage to the ordinary nose-ringed woman.'

"But surely I was born in marriage, *aie*,"

"There, calm yourself, my turtle-dove. I know you always dislike me to say this. Of course you were born in marriage after a fashion, the fashion of the Feringhis and their law. But not what *we* count marriage. Not in any way which could help in your after-life."

"No?" Betty was wearied of the discussion, so often renewed.

"No indeed. Had you been a child of marriage you would have gone from me to a husband's family before you were twelve, at the latest. Our intimacy would have ended then; you would have been the slave of the *sasuba*, your husband's mother. I have treated you differently from that."

"I know you have, dear mother," said Betty, aware of the tyranny of the Hindu mother-in-law.

"It is the daughter of a Murali who enjoys domestic love and petting. But our intimacy has been exceptional. For sixteen years now you have slept either on the same bed with me or in the next room."

"It has been a dear and a kind intimacy. Why can it not continue?"

"Not altogether as it has been, for the passage of time prevents that," said Vembai, getting rather beyond her depth. "You are more than old enough for a lover, beautiful Nilya! I also wish to

know the life of love again for a space before it is too late For I am not old, am I, darling?"

There was an anxiety in the enquiry

Betty this time put out her hand over her mother, tenderly stroking and inspecting the face with which she had grown up. She could not be expected to see its faults, the disguised tendency to hardness of the network of minute wrinkles around the eyes, which were more lustrous, certainly more potentially diabolical, than her own. For freshness there was no comparison between the two faces

"You know what Ajabai thinks of our looks, and You will not be old for an age or two yet."

"Not that, not that," said the mother well pleased "It is much that for a few years I need not be beautiful only in the darkness"

"Then return, as you will, to the ways of love for which you were given to the god, and from which I do not withhold you But let me go hence without my fortune, though I know not where."

Betty had tried to keep elemental distinctions clear in her little brain.

"Not so, not so You cannot thus rend the woven garment Here, as a Murali beside me, sharing our confidences, telling each other of our lovers!"

Something like this was considered the ideal life between mother and daughter by corrupt Roman matrons of the Empire.

"For you as you think right; but no such life for me!"

"Oh yes, you will come to it, my pet," said Yenubai, securing to her purpose like a true Asiatic.

The worst of it was, Betty began to feel that she might come to it if this sort of thing went on, supported by natural affection and opposed by nothing.

"How happy we can be here together," the

mother Murali persuaded. 'I shall tell you all about Haji Pant, who will be grateful to me for the signed paper. And you will tell me, to begin with, about the Raja Sahib who worships the ground you tread upon."

Only this reference was required to rouse Betty

"Never!" she cried, flinging away to a little distance from her mother. "Oh that bloated face as of a goblin; and his breath which leaves a trail of liquor in the air, streaming like a flag behind him!"

"Never mind," said Venubai, laughing "It is well to begin with a prince, as I never had the luck to do. Lovers more to your mind will be eager to follow."

She had fetched out one foot, and with the prehensile toe had gathered to her the voluminous document from the floor.

"And you can urge me to such things!" cried Betty aghast.

"Of course I can, since they are for your good. Here," she said, smoothing out the crumpled sheets on her knee and turning to the last one, prepared for signature "That is right. Get up and fetch the little pen with which you make your pretty signature. For this is where you've GOT to sign."

"I'll do nothing of the kind," said Betty slowly and with determination.

At this Venubai was again upon her feet, facing her daughter.

"This sort of thing has got to end," she said. "I've stood enough talk from you because of our old love, and because I'm good-natured, and ours is a kindly profession But one thing holds with another, and all depends upon the paper being signed."

"I think so too," said Betty with a flash of intuition.

She saw it now, how many things hitched upon that untidy file of brownish paper.

From her own youth and ignorance and rightful instincts she was drawing strength for a defiance to which Marthaba, with all good will, would not have had the courage to urge her

"Things will never end like this," Betty was thinking within herself. "If I can resist my mother for a while it is the most. As soon as Hari Pant comes I shall have to sign, I cannot resist him. Once I have signed I am in their hands, and things will happen as arranged; Ram Rao is to be sent for first of all. Woe is me. Will Edgar never come and save me? He has no time to do so at present.

"But if I can delay their plans," she advanced in her thinking, "it ■ something. Merely to refuse to sign is a little thing. After all, this is *my* paper, to tear up or to do with as I please. If I tore it up that would hamper their plans nicely. It would take them days or weeks to replace it. They do not dream of my doing such a thing. I shall never dare to do it. But I will do it, and thoroughly."

Betty took the file out of Venuba's hands, who was glad to surrender it. Then, stepping back a few feet, she carefully tore it across the middle, through the many thicknesses of paper, which resisted somewhat. Again, before she could be prevented, she tore each of these halves once more across, so that the original oblong sheets were each in four pieces, far from regular.

Venuba had watched as if bemused, unable to interfere, unable even to comprehend until it was too late.

Then she burst out in a volume of the unclean native abuse called *shivi*, a dialect by itself, such as, to do her justice, was not often heard in that house. It began, "Child of an abandoned woman."

Having done her little deed, Betty had not a word

to say. She stood dazed and frightened, yet with a certain satisfaction in her heart

For a few minutes Venubai rushed about demented, sometimes catching Betty by the arm She slapped her on the face and on the arms, then laughed harshly at this as at an ineffective vengeance.

" You heard what Wamanrao said, ' she muttered, " as to what he would do to a daughter or daughter-in-law who merely refused to sign such a paper. But as for you . . . . ! "

She looked about the large room for the means with which to do an unaccustomed thing

As it happened, in one corner was a wooden chest which had arrived the day before, brass-edged, thoroughly native. Upon the cover lay the cord with which it had been bound in an elaborate knot for security. This cord was white, of English make, and half an inch in thickness

With the cry as of a tigress, Venubai leaped upon the providential instrument of punishment.

Hardly anybody in India would have blamed her, under the circumstances, for what she was doing The love between mother and daughter had by this time dissolved and faded away.

Had Betty measured her strength against her mother's, a thing she would have scorned to do, she might have proved the stronger. As it was, she was helpless.

Her mother tore from her shoulders the single garment, exposing as far as the waist the stalwart cinnamon back. Upon this the tightly woven cord, held in a loop, descended some scores of times. It was wielded by an arm robust and unhampered It did not draw blood, but it left a welt at each stroke. These welts, upon that skin, showed not red but nearly black.

At first Venubai followed her shrinking daughter about the room. Then she pushed her down over

the small table and hold her there while continuing the beating

Though Betty did not resist, she yelled lustily "Agabai," she cried at each blow, like any other Indian girl at such a moment. "*Agabai*, I am dead, I am dead, *agabai*!"

CHAPTER IX

In front with far-flung wall, and many a tower
Turret and dome and pinnacle lofty,
The huge Fane seems to lead the land
And there before the gate
The human band expectant stand,
The axe is ready for Kehama's hand

The Curse of Kehama.

"Enough, bai!" said a voice of quiet authority at Venubai's elbow. "Whatever the gul has done and I see what it is, she has had her punishment.

A thoroughbred-looking Brahmin, very different in appearance from the agent, had stepped with bare feet into the room from outdoors, and up to the deal table on which the poor gul was extended.

At the sight of him several women servants of the house, who had gathered at the inner door, with varied feelings, to witness the fate of their young mistress, scattered from respect, with a crude attempt at salaams.

Venubai was bent over at her job, her own garment fallen from her shoulders She was panting, and flushed, which means darkened in hue She certainly displayed the figure for which India is unrivalled

"I'll give it to you" Hari Pant had heard her saying rhythmically with each stroke of the rope. "This is my fault for not doing so earlier. So you have grown pampered to womanhood, eh? And now you would blacken our faces by refusing the god? Has not everything been leading to this for four years past? Yet now you shrink from your fate? I'll give it to you, daughter of the shameless!

You wouldn't sign the paper which the Gaun wanted? And to make it sure you must tear it up! Who taught you such craft and obstinacy? In our land such things are not possible without a lover behind them. Have you a secret lover, O Nilya, unworthy to be an honest Muslim? By your age girls always have one in Bharata if not controlled by marriage or by the service of Mahadeo. Who is he? speak! He can be no orthodox Hindu or there would be no trouble about it. Who is he, for whom you despise my wishes and the love of the Raja Sahib? Even a Mussalman lover need not have caused all this concealment. Stay, can you be after one of the make-believe Sahibs from your father's land? You always hankered that way. You won't speak and tell me who it is? Oh, if I don't give it to you!

So by a sort of spontaneous combustion the idea was out. Only a white lover would explain the situation.

Hari Pant took it in with a twitch of the eyelashes, an expansion of the delicate nostrils. It was a plausible hypothesis which might account for many things. It was his business to follow up the clue or to reject it on good grounds. Any such lover as suggested must be a trespasser upon his domain.

Some cause or other, he thought in a flash, was putting out of gear, and causing to wobble painfully, the delicate compass entrusted to his hands, upon which so much depended. Where was the unsuspected lump of iron thus powerful to warp the instrument?

Hari Pant had paused for a moment, unperceived, to watch the drama.

The beautiful girl was extended for the upper part of her body, across the table, held there by her mother's left arm.

Betty said nothing more coherent than "No!" or "Don't" as the coiled rope fell upon her shoulders and back. At other strokes she returned to "*Agabai!*" or "I am dead." She writhed upon the table moaning and yelling without restraint. Though well grown herself, she contrasted with the post-nuptial forms of her mother. Her face was hidden on one arm.

It was a shock to Venubai to find herself confronted with her spiritual guide and the man she loved. Though naturally excited, she was no virago even at this moment. What she had been saying followed a reasonable line of thought. And what she had been doing was no more than most Indian parents would have done under the circumstances.

Yet she was conscious of being heated and dishevelled. She was not looking at her best. Not thus could she hope to charm the controller of unlimited Indian beauty, and the thought increased her resentment against her daughter. She was also more voluble than was her wont.

"Let me get in two or three more licks, O Guru Sahib!" she said impulsively, without pausing to adjust her sari. "If you knew how well she deserved them!"

"I know she does, bai. None the less, forbear."

"If your reverence knew how she spoke of the god! And how viciously she tore up the document, which needed some tearing!"

"Do I not see the fragments upon the floor? Call to have them swept up."

But Venubai still stood impressive, not unstatuesque, one strong arm holding down her daughter, the other upraised to smite. Such exposure is little regarded in the East, even by virtuous women. In sundry Mohammedan lands

it is made grotesquely less of than the she wing of the face.

Betty's nerve had changed to a heart-broken sobbing, which shook her whole frame, when the blows ceased to fall and she felt that she had a friend. It was the weakness of her situation that she had to regard Hari Pant as such.

"O, help Guru Sahib!" she moaned without raising her head. "Oh, how it hurts! Let me go now and I will try not to offend again."

"She does not need help for a while," said Venubai grimly. "She has done quite enough for her purposes. Oh, the things that depended upon that stamped paper now destroyed. Your reverence had better let me finish the job."

"Not now. The whole street is interested in the case proceeding from this house; I could hear them a good way off. Come Nitya, you have not been a bad girl hitherto. Promise to behave yourself if I get you let off the remainder of your punishment."

"It would come in handy for next time," said Venubai, reluctantly lowering her uprised arm. "For is still the question of a hidden lover to go ."

I promise, I promise," sobbed Betty. "O d kind Guru Sahib, you who were always gentle h me, save me! Only let me go now, and I will omise anything you wish."

If this attitude on her part was not heroic, it was ingularly Indian. She twisted like some wounded creature as she lay there, ashamed to live.

"And I, have I not been gentle to her until she deserved gentleness no longer?" protested Venubai with conscious rectitude.

So she had been, as the Guru quite agreed. But the pretty flower of affection between mother and daughter hung now on a broken stem. It was to Hari Pant that the poor girl, in confusion of mind

and in pain, turned instinctively for protection, having no other helper.

He was gratified by this attitude Since entering the room he had been attracted by the beaten girl, always somewhat of a favourite with him, and not by the mother who beat her. Vembai saw as much. Though they may not be jealous in her line, still it is not safe for the same man to be concerned with mother and daughter,

Therefore Vembai was anxious to end the situation and to get Betty out of the room as modestly as might be She adjusted her own silk garment by way of preliminary, pulling the fringed edge around her chin as it had lain while she conversed with her agent. She gathered together the upper folds of Betty's cotton sari and flung them over the bruised back

"But stay," said Hari Pant with a little wave of the fingers which was regarded It looked as if he wished to prolong a situation which he found pleasant.

He took up the coil of rope which Vembai had let fall

"Luckily there is no blood upon it," he remarked with obvious intention. "There would soon have been if I had let you go on thrashing the child as you wished, but. There is no sense in overdoing a thing or in being brutal."

Already there was a change of tone. Betty tried, without rising, to steal a glance at one who seemed to express sympathy. Her mother was blamed by implication Even in India, "Codlin is the friend, not Short."

"Come Nilya, clear out of this," said her mother sharply. "You have disgraced us quite enough."

"The child has done wrong, and deserved to be chastised. Only you do not go about it in the right way, bai. Henceforth let me manage such things.

Nilya, before you leave the room, I wish you to answer a question or two."

"Yes, your reverence."

She had restrained her sobbing and was looking up and around at him with curiosity, as far as she could without showing her face.

"Try and not aggravate your mother by my more bold actions. It is quite true that you must be whipped when you defy the god. Try not to do so again, that's a good girl, such as you always have been with me. Do you trust me, child?"

"Whom have I in heaven or earth to trust except you, my Guru? Have you not saved me from being killed just now?"

"Oh no, it was not as bad as that. But do you believe that I am wiser than you?"

A trill of laughter, both merry and mocking, could come even at that moment from Betty on the table.

"Oh master! Oh Guru! You, as high as the sky overhead for wisdom, to ask that of me so silly!"

"You *are* silly, beyond a doubt," said Hari Pant dispassionately. "You should try to be less so. It does not add to the Murali's attractions, however it may to the married woman's. An educated wife brings bad luck, it is true. But the brides of Shiva should learn all they can without impairing their looks. Why, I have women at the temples, and in my service abroad, who have mastered all the learning of the Sahib *log* in their own land."

"Are they wiser than Miss Walpole, who is a B.A. of Bombay?" asked Betty, really interested.

"They have that worthless degree, and others, won in Vilayat. But their deepest wisdom comes not thence."

"I know whence it comes, kind master," cried Betty with a bright smile on her blubbered face,

carried away by her interest "I have heard of a Tarabai who is there now, having returned from Vilayat, wise and beautiful and kind who is a trained nurse for the sick"

"That, among other things, true Be a better girl, little Nilya, rebel not against the god that you be counted worthy of the companionship of Tara and of others like her"

"I will be," she declared, not knowing what she said. She was not mistress of herself. She seldom was after Hari Pant had been talking to her He too, besides her father and Miss Walpole, had educated her. His influence was the more potent, being of the present, instead of the past. He was the dangerous educator. When with him it was only in a corner of her heart that she could remember that she was on the wrong track, that such things and companions could never be for her if she led an honourable life according to the old standards.

"So now to return to the questions, little girl." He seemed to make a larger use than before of the diminutives to which the Marathi language lends itself. "Do you believe that I wish you well, that I am your true friend?"

At this she tried again to look around at him without exposing herself. Then, giving up the constrained position, she rose to her feet, drawing the sari above her bosom, flinging the end of it over the left shoulder, then drawing what remained of it down over the head and the right shoulder to her chin She stood again fully clothed, though shaken and hurt, meeting with something like responsive attraction the glance of Hari Pant's famous grey eyes.

During the minute that was required for all this he watched her with an admiration which Venubai resented in silence but with a darkening countenance.

"Pardon me," Betty then said with a mock little manner of affectionate respect "Oh Gaurji whom have I on this earth for a true friend if not you who have just rescued me from my mother's destructive rage?"

This rather nasty remark was accompanied by an angry glance at Vembai

"Do not blame your mother overmuch, my pupil," with a delusive appearance of standing up for Vembai. "I suppose you know that you've made a peck of trouble for us by this performance of yours?" glancing comically at the litter on the floor. "You must have used some vigour and purpose during the minute at your command"

"I believe I did," said Betty, taking this as a compliment and with something like a twinkle in her tearful eyes

"Bad girl! So many things depended upon the signing of that paper."

"Positively, she did it in a flash," put in Vembai. "I stood as one bewitched watching the horror going on under my eyes, unable to prevent it or to interfere in time. But so many things depended upon the *sahipatra*" (paper of signature)

"You may well say so, bai. The coming of her princely lover from Kanhala which I must now countermand."

"And the coming of my lover, for which I may now wait, I suppose," said Vembai ruefully. "And my restoration to caste and to the temple service, and the girl's own complete admission to our religion" I shouldn't wonder if she had a secret lover on her own all this time, perchance a Christian and a Feringhi

"A white lover within these our sacred precincts?" exclaimed the chief priest, firing at the thought. "Nay, woman, dismiss the idea, I will not think so ill of our little Nilya Not without the strongest

positive proofs, and then woe to her and to such a lover!"

"Her grandmother, my *aie*, has been lately here on a visit of some weeks. Though she would not eat with me, which grieved me though she was quite right so far as that went she has lived half her life among the Christys, and has picked up some of their strange ideas. It may be—I know not—I would not do my mother wrong—but she may have served as a go-between for Nilya and some contaminating lover."

"Not so, not so," said Hari Pant triumphantly after a moment's thought. "You wrong your mother, who has remained a faithful Hindu under difficult circumstances. For consider. No such lover for Nilya as you suspect could be evolved out of the blue sky. They must first have met somewhere before messages could be sent. And it is plain that they have not met."

He brought out the conclusion like a Q.E.D. At the same time he was watching Betty narrowly, to see if she gave herself away.

She was naturally shaky on her legs not fit to stand. In the corner of her consciousness which remained clear she was pitifully repeating: "Oh Edgar, come quickly or it will be too late!"

She faltered as she said aloud; "Let there be permission" (to depart).

"Courage, Nilya," said Hari Pant with much kindness. He could see no sign of a hidden secret. "Very soon you can go. But tell me, if I ever ask you to do something out of the way, the reason for which you cannot understand, will you do it without hesitation?"

"Is it to give my signature, Guruji?"

"Perhaps that, perhaps something, anything else the motive of which you cannot fathom because you have not the brains. Will you simply do it without hesitation?"

She looked up at him with eyes watching even in her humiliation and weakness, timidly, yet not without fear mingled with distrust

"See," he continued, "I will not even look upon you while you speak in any such way as to control your answer. I wish you to be a free agent Give me this promise without undue influence from me or not at all. Will you obey without questioning or rebellion whatever I may tell you to do hereafter, no matter how purposeless or queer it may seem to you?"

"What will it be, Guruji?"

"And what is it likely to be?" asked Vembai, moved by the same curiosity

"Ah, that I cannot possibly tell you, my dear, because I do not know myself Whatever may arise, may seem desirable or useful, in the quickly shifting changes of the fate in which we are involved"

He was not looking at Betty as he spoke. His glittering grey eyes, the lightness of which had been much exaggerated by Marthabai, were decorously lowered from Betty's face and still heaving bosom These eyes were really of the handsome colour of polished dark grey granite.

It is true that the hapless girl was not, as she had been at times before, under hypnotic subjection to him.

It was with self-determination, of her free will that without seeking his eyes this time, she spoke:

"I promise, Guruji Whatever you may at some future time put upon me, I promise to do that thing without seeking to understand it."

She was rewarded with a brilliant smile, which some might have thought flashy

"That is my good little girl, as you used to be. Now go to your bed and lie down. You will not be

the worse for this whipping after a good sleep. After all, the Shastras authorise parents, husbands and spiritual guides to beat those in their charge, yet only behind, and not on the nobler parts in front. But you need not have been so severe, bai. Nilya will want some fomenting, some nursing and care. Who is there that can attend to her?"

Venuba, who did not like the way in which she was by implication put in the wrong as towards her daughter, glanced at Betty. By the freemasonry of their sex, and of the household, which still subsisted, Betty understood.

"Dhondibai?" she faltered.

"Yes, you can have Dhondibai to attend to you. Go." Then, in explanation to the priest. "It is a Mahar servant by the day such as I still have to put up with, lacking caste."

Betty tottered as she walked to the door, where she turned round for a lowly salutation, hands to forehead, to her Gurnji.

Her temples were throbbing, she was in pain all over, and the poor little brain which had been under discussion was reeling. It was well that nothing more was to depend for a while upon her perception or judgment.

Yet as she stumbled over the threshold she remembered the lover who had not come upon a hippogriff to save her, who even then was struggling with the difficulties of a miry road.

"Oh Edgar, you did not set out any too soon. Come quickly, or it is too late."

Hari Pant followed her with eyes keen and critical, rather than amorous.

"There goes a fortune," he remarked, "larger than has ever come to these temples in a single windfall. I would not mention it before her for fear of upsetting her with her own importance. Let her continue to consider it a little thing. But

there went many lakhs of rupees, which we cannot spare. They will be the more easily transferred if we do not keep upon them."

"Yes, that would you thank of, the money."

Vembai had formed these words in her mind, but did not dare to utter them. She knew that they were not entirely true; and even wished that they were. She decided to accentuate the situation.

Undoubtedly, within the half-hour, the powerful Guru's liking had passed from herself to her daughter. Vembai felt it, though Betty in her innocence did not. Hari Pant was not sensual as Indian men go. Where all such relations were legitimate, where there was no possible thought of wrong-doing, but precisely the opposite, in connection with them, he had to pass by most opportunities." He was not quick to kindle. He was flinty in the extreme, with standards of taste which had to be satisfied. It had taken long to bring him to a qualified assent to Vembai's claims.

And now so much, to bring about which had been her chief thought for a great time past, was lost. It had not been put into words, but it was in the air. She was in love with Hari Pant, not altogether basely. She loved him for his sheer good looks, his intellect, his brisk yet quiet manner, and also, it must be said, for his mystical powers, his holiness.

The director of a thousand beauties, the master of the Garden of Kama could not but be fastidious. His thoughts were mostly occupied with the business and the politics of the temples. 'Napoleon can only eat one dinner a day; and he cannot have more mistresses' than many a subject.

But Vembai had seen it passing, that delicate desire which was hard to tempt—passing from her own charms, unquestionable by any Eastern standard, to a whey-faced girl. She felt it with a revolted heart, which in that moment turned against

ier daughter It was the tragedy of supersession by mere youth Sickeningly silly youth, as it reasonably seems with no charm save its own youthfulness? But the heart of man, even the loftiest, cannot resist it, as Sainte-Beuve mighty lover as well as critic, over and over experienced.

After a pause of such length that Hari Pant looked up to see what was the matter Vembai spoke, in a compromise between prudence and the truth:

"It is well for your reverence that I too am careless in the matter of money. There are greater things in life"

He glanced up again at a certain tone in her voice

"There certainly are greater things, ba— one or two But by them the temples subsist, and we the twice-born hold our power, and the likes of you dare not defy us Love is one of these things, and the other religion, the due social order which we direct."

"When shall I get back my caste-standing?" she implored "It is a good caste, that of the charitable Maharaja Balwant Rao, who is interested in the matter."

"His caste and yours, except that, you lack yours, woman, are but the dust of the road in my eyes, if you are not docile in obedience."

There spoke the immeasurable pride of the Brahmin, ludicrous when not effective. But here it worked. These two, though they sought the same objects, could not be called allies, such was the inequality between them. Lovers they might have been under happier circumstances, which now seemed unlikely. But Vembai was no more than the instrument.

"I beseech your reverence to regard my meritorious efforts to please you during all these years."

"You have spoiled everything by your haste just now If you want to do a thing, you women, you want to do it at once without an instant's delay. No wonder that to be born a woman in the next life is the greatest degradation which can befall a man's soul See what has come of this inconsiderate haste You knew that I was coming to you to-day Under my eye the girl would have made no trouble about signing. Look now at this letter!"

He indicated with impatient scorn the torn document and the fallen rope.

"I have sinned, I have done wrong" said Vembai, lifting to him her glorious eyes, now perplexed

"But it was from love I did so, and the wish to please you, Guru Sahib I thought, in my foolish heart, what joy supposing I can have the *sahupatra* all ready by the time his reverence comes. Then, when Nilya did what you see, my blood was all in a flame, because I feared your love was lost Even yet it is a satisfaction to me to have thrashed the daughter of asses"

She spoke sincerely being very much in love But everything was wrong that morning; nothing held When she stopped to think, Vembai could not be glad she had thrashed her daughter. For if the Brahmin had not come in just when he did, had not seen what he saw, things might not have turned out so disjointedly, and there would still have been a chance of his proposed love. It was an evil concatenation altogether

He looked her up and down, and she could not stand a critical examination Her purple garment was rumpled, even torn and ink stained. She did not look the better for being flushed and excited.

His wide cart-wheel turban of salmon hue, elaborately done up with the twists and turns which make trade secrets, somewhat shaded his face. This could have borne inspection by any light, being of the

Konkani Brahmin type which sometimes seems to show even over-breeding in its delicate refinement.

How many a peasant or peer of Scotland has no such features!

Hari Pant belonged to the steaming wonderland where Kanhara kingdom reaches to the sea. Not far away was Ratnagiri also renowned for its handsome Maratha Brahmins who to cleverly add vigour, often shown in their poisonous opposition to British rule. They are tenacious and unscrupulous in faction, feeling that they have somehow been done out of their birthright to rule Western India. Of them was Hari Pant through many of his ancestors. The Kukadays were particular swells even among sacerdotal Brahmins. They could by no means marry any Brahmin girl, but were confined within a narrow *gotra*, or marriage pen.

This was to their own greater glory. It could be claimed that nowhere has the elaborate in-breeding of the Aryan race been carried further than in Persia and in the Konkan. Some weakness must be expected to result; but in the Konkan it is not that of the mind.

An extreme physical beauty has been one result. What must the sisters and wives be of such men as the Konkani Brahmins? They are not easy to see, although not expressly secluded. When seen, they have swept Europeans off their feet.

Hari Kukaday was forty-five years of age, which is in no sense youngish in India. He was tall and lightly built, active though inclined to stoop. In him the pursuits of the mind had worn down the body. His thin face, with its small features and hollow cheeks, had something haunting and pathetic about it. Here was the distinguished and ascetic stamp sometimes given by asceticism, though Hari Pant was no ascetic. Perhaps he was not in very

good health, but near the end of the latter part of an Indian life

His skin was of a light brown almost running into a golden colour The luminous eyes of most Indians were in this case replaced by the eyes of dark granite which gave Hari Pant his characteristic look His feet were small and elegant, his fingers of extreme slenderness and length.

The chief priest of the Lingam temples had only reached his position after approved usefulness Hindus and Christians in these days have to know all that can be learned of each other Hari Pant, disregarding the prohibitions which hold for inferiors, had spent some ten years in Europe, acquiring with facility the learning of the Europeans in order to be able to baffle and scandalise them There seemed no end to the things of which he had a scholarly knowledge and Europe was not the only continent which he had searched It was all in order to serve the temples, for whose benefit, and for his vested interests in them he worked night and day.

Hari Pant had two families of children, separated by some twenty years He was a grandfather; while two of his sons were studying in an ancient English University His wives were two; the mother of this elder family, and a young girl whom he had married some years back for his own satisfaction, and with whom he was happy

His desires did not frequently wander beyond this arrangement. Though there is no necessary conflict between the flesh and the intellect, which often flourish together as in the case of Sainte-Beuve, this pontiff of Shiva was no voluptuary All things were lawful at Lingam, and for Hari Pant most of all But all things were not convenient or desired His was a life full of large interests, which he found more absorbing than petty

things. He neither over-ate, like so many Brahmins when they can afford it nor took pains to feather his own nest.

If Betty and her fortune were acquired for the temples, as must be, as was the universal expectation in Western India Hari Pant would not profit by the transaction. Certainly the money would go over in a lump sum to the trustees As for the maid who went with it, he had never thought of her until this morning save in a kindly light as his pupil and ward. He now felt this kindness vastly increased by her helpless virginal charm

"Do not be so hard on Nilya again," he now said with a smile. "She has given me something to do to undo her morning's performance, and I must hasten about it."

"But your reverence will come again, will you not as promised this evening?"

"Payment upon delivery of goods" was essentially the brutal answer. "Look after my pupil; yet you need not restrain her movements

Venuba thought that the light of her life was vanishing as Hari Pant departed.

He left the house afoot, as he had arrived No family in Langam kept a conveyance of any kind for private purposes, although many could afford it To be sure, the distances within the little town were minute But this outward simplicity is of the core of Indian life, and is departed from at one's own risk.

The bedroom which Betty sought, after giving a cry for Dhondibai, was that which she had always shared with her mother

The kindly serving-woman overtook her Seeing her weakness, she passed an arm around Betty's waist and led her forward

The room was nearly bare of contents save for a large iron bedstead with a spring mattress, but

without European bedding. Natives can seldom resist buying such an article when their means reach to it.

But they draw the line by choice at any further furniture. When Hyder Ali had to flee from the battle of Porto Novo, he was seated on a *chowki*, a portable stool about nine inches high, covered by a carpet. How natural to suppose that he sat there like a human being, with his feet out! But no, he sat cross-legged, with his feet hidden under him. This was his posture when the faithful groom ventured to lay hold of his legs and put on his slippers for him.

The invincible crook in the knees, which prevents one's being happy seated without one's feet tucked under one, continues, and extended to Betty and her mother. There was therefore not a chair in their bedroom. Nor was there a chest of drawers, the place of these being taken by wooden boxes.

Otherwise, if an otherwise be possible, the room was of good size, shaded and pleasant. On the walls pinned up, were several coloured newspaper pictures including one of Lord Chillingham the sporting Governor of Bombay, popular with natives and Europeans.

Betty's own instinct was to wash her face thoroughly. Then Dhondibai turned her over laying thin wet cloths upon the bruised and aching back, with many an ancouth expression of sympathy.

But when so much had been done, Betty, instead of letting the servant go on with her programme of care found herself uncontrollably hungry.

"I don't think I'm going to die, Dhondu, for I have the most terrible appetite."

"I'm not surprised, young mistress. That was always how it used to be when my husband, who is now in heaven, had beaten me."

"What do you think you can get for me, Dhondu dear?"

There was no hot food in the house at that early hour. All had had their bite at cold victuals on rising with tea. The abundant late breakfast, probably to be cooked by Venubai herself, would not be ready for some hours.

However, Dhondubai bustled about to some purpose. She collected an overflowing platter of broken bread of several native sorts, with cold rice and cold goat's meat curried, not at all to be despised. She made tea, upon which India is becoming as dependent as Europe. Only it has not the same taste, served in a metal vessel after being made at a smoky fire on the floor.

So Betty ate on the bedstead (sitting up, her feet under her) until she was satisfied. She ate with her fingers and with a healthy young appetite. Seeing that Dhondibai looked hungry she told her to eat. Dhondibai was not supposed to be fed in the house, yet sometimes had meals given her.

She was a Mahar widow of middle age who came in to work during the day. She had that morning walked in from her village four miles away in the deeper jungle, where were her children and her blind old father, who depended upon her. She was always grateful for a cup of tea, or for any broken food to carry back.

That she should be there like that was a part of the involved servant question due to Venubai's lost caste. The Mahars really have no caste to lose, though they think they have, and give themselves airs as if they had. Of course they must not eat with Christians; and there is a single caste in those parts below them.

Even Dhondibai was capable of putting on airs about eating in Venubai's house, though usually too hungry. She and her folks were what are called

out-castes, on the depressed classes among whom such good missionary work has been done. She herself at one period in the past had served in the bungalow of a Christian missionary, far away, and had always retained some impress from this.

Dhondibai, more simply called Dhondu, did not know her own age, and looked old, but was probably forty. She stood stalwart in her legs, high up on which was tucked a sari, so faded that it was impossible to tell what colour it had been. She supported after a fashion half a dozen souls by her grinding and other work at Vimbai's, and by the eight miles which she trudged daily, rising always in the dark. Dhondu had her absurd points, but was truly a good soul.

When they had both eaten, though not exactly together, she wanted Betty to lie relaxed and to let her knead the tired limbs with her strong knuckles, to ease and refresh them. Such massaging (shampooing it is sometimes called in India) is what the commonest natives are apt to do without any training, and with the best effect.

"After that you shall sleep," said Dhondibai.

But these simple words, or the tone in which they were spoken, somehow set Betty to crying irresistibly.

She lay there on her stomach, sobbing as if her heart would break and only repeating: "I wish I were dead! I wish I were dead!"

"No," don't," said Dhondibai, continuing the massaging.

Then, kneeling beside the bed, she began to pat Betty, as one pats a baby to sleep. Together with this she crooned some lines, imperfectly remembered from her days among the missionaries, yet favourites with Betty. They were a translation of Watts' cradle song, rather smoother than the original:

Nisa nisa maihya hula,
Bhi-u naho tu honala.

These lines and others with spirited little variations, which should rightly come in a mother's comforting voice, to the patting of a mother's hands, came in Dhondubai's gruff tones, yet not without their sweetness

Betty began to cry anew, while Dhondubai continued Neither attempted to talk

The girl was forlorn, and at an extremity. She felt her danger acutely, while not aware of any more strength or wit or courage to struggle against it. After this she would have to drift down the stream to the great sea, to be devoured of its monsters as fate willed. What brain she had, had been ordered and taken possession of by Ilai Pant, who was directing her destiny

"Guruji is kinder than my own mother," was the last conscious wave of thought that passed over her; "even Dhondu is kinder Oh Edgar, who are you, where are you; or did I but dream of you? If I fail to wait for you it is not because I have not tried."

She seemed to be grasping at the feet of an image in a dream. She was asleep.

The rain, which had begun to fall heavily again after holding up for some twenty-four hours, impeding Edgar on his way, lulled her through the long forenoon with its unrivalled lullaby.

When Betty awoke, her limbs and her back no longer ached, but only her mind Even this was somewhat appeased, and hopeful

To her came the ravishing scent of freshly made curry in the air, her mother's cooking, as she well knew, and bringing up many a memory of household kindliness. Vembai had had the grace to keep away from her own bedroom, where Betty slept; and indeed her bedroom does not mean the same to an Indian as to a European woman. Instead of bothering her daughter she sent in a steaming platterful of Betty's favourite dishes.

When these had been disposed of, life began to seem more possible but not as a Monarch. Betty felt more determination to paddle her own canoe.

She had scarcely lacked a confidant until within a few days of her grandmother's departure. Now she decided to make one of the servant who had shown so motherly a heart.

Seated on the bed, with Dhondibai in the same attitude on the floor before her, and having seen that the door was closed, Betty began her story.

She told of the meeting with Dr Fulton four months before, of the plotted love and of her promise to send for his help if ever she needed it badly, and of the message which Ajabai had taken some five days ago. Of the persecution which she was suffering in order to shepherd her into the fold of Shiva, there was no need to tell.

Now appeared the advantage, in an illiterate heathen woman, of even a little Christian teaching in the past.

Dhondibai was not a Christian; she would have been shocked at the idea of such a thing. She adored Shiva, and saw nothing wrong in the custom of the place, it was so entirely natural.

Yet she was well nigh the only person in Lingam who could have sympathised with Betty in her trial. It was the thought of compulsion being exercised upon one to make one do what seemed wrong to oneself that moved her. Dhondibai also lacked the blind general hatred of Europeans, having received, though but in a small way, good and not evil at their hands. The story of Fulton, the white lover out of the sky, rather appealed to her, suggesting tales which she had heard of Prince Krishna.

"You are not fitted for the life here, young mistress," she declared from the floor. "Truly there is no harm in it, and you would grace it, being beautiful. But if you say that you are a Christian

at heart, and that this life seems wrong to you, why there is nothing more to be said, and it is wrong to force you. You are not so young as most Muralis when they begin, and you ought to know your own mind. Yet I was hoping that when you started in on your own you might take me as your chief servant, and that my time of abundance might thus come before I die, although late in life."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, dear Dhondu," said Betty, smiling. "Not in that way will you ever profit through me."

"To think of the presents your lordly lovers would have given me!" pursued Dhondubai, surrendering the daydream with regret.

"Not in that way, be sure. But perhaps in other more honourable ways. Who knows what may be the gratitude of Fulton Sahib if you help me, and perhaps even of the English Sahib, who are responsible for me? Meanwhile I have not a piece about me. Yet there is this silver bracelet, of which I have a duplicate, and which my mother will thus not miss from my arm. I know not what it may be worth."

But Dhondibai knew within a rupee. The amount, though not large, for the heiress was not entrusted with large values in any shape, meant deliverance for the village woman from a host of little debts.

"Tie it up, do, in your *padar*" (fold of the sari), Betty continued persuasively; and it was done.

"Not because of this noble present," remarked Dhondibai, "but because I am sorry for you, and love your pretty ways. If the life of a bride of Shiva seems wrong to you, why wrong it is for you. That's settled. My missionary Madam Sahib whom I once served would have said that it is wrong anyhow; but I don't follow her so far."

"No matter," said Betty. "Never shall it be

my life Now how do you think you can help me?'

"If Little Sahib is a true lover," thought out the older woman, 'he must be already coming to you hot-foot, or perchance already arrived as far as he can. The only place where a Sahib can put up near Langam is the hotel That is two miles from here, and in the direction opposite to the village where my children and my old blind man are waiting for me for their evening meal"

"I had thought as much. But will you, Dhondu, like a dear good soul keep them waiting to-night while you trudge to the hotel to see if a Sahib is arrived there, and if perchance it is my Sahib?'

"I suppose I must, and without grumbling. A Sahib, once come as far as the hotel in search of you, would not know where to turn next He dare not show his face in Langam town, searching.'

'Of course not. And I as little dare go there by daylight"

"What the white Murah, for whom a Raja Sahib is waiting, in whom all the town takes pride and stock? If you were found upon the hotel premises by day or night it would be the end of Connell Sahib's trade, which is already resented."

"Yet my movements are not hampered. I could go to meet my Sahib upon the way so soon as darkness falls, if only by my good luck he is arrived"

"Humph! You have not gone out hitherto by night, and for this purpose you must not go out by day."

"You would not be noticed, Dhondu."

'"I thought you were coming to that. No one will notice an old village woman, going to Connell Sahib's hotel, as she has gone before, with a basket of vegetables on her head to sell."

"Oh you dear good soul!"

"I will do so much for you, though my old man watch all night But tell me how shall I know your Sahib when I see him?"

"Few Sahibs come, or none, at this season But Edgar is tall and good-looking, with smiling dark eyes that wait upon you. He is not one of the greater Sahibs, with many servants'

"I shall find him, if so be he is there May his god speed me, and may Mahadeo forgive me When shall I set out?'

"Not yet it is too early. It would seem too strange in the house But by four o'clock I can tell my mother that I have given you leave to depart."

"And what shall I tell your Sahib when I see him?"

"Tell him that my need is extreme; you do not require to ask me! Tell him to meet me as soon as darkness falls, before eight o'clock, in the *rais* of mango trees half-way between here and the ho-tel. I can risk getting out for the once, and it will be the last time; for Edgar must carry me away now or never And remember, Dhondu you will have to stay and bring him to the grove at nightfall No chance must be risked of his missing the way."

Dhondibai, though grumbling at the last condition, assented, seeing that the young mistress was taking things into her own hands.

Then, to while away the time, she sang over and over again a remembered missionary hymn, not translated but composed in Marathi by a convert who was a poet. It was on the certainty of death, and went with a recurrent haunting wail:

Maḍaua ya i-la, ye-i-la,
Ghe-u ni-ya i-la

(Death will come, will come, will take and carry you away).

It was in such a very humorous key that it suited Betty's feelings. This was a favourite stanza, showing the stress which Indians lay upon lightness of complexion.

Gora sundara nahi asala,
Jondu ri nahi dagi hi nasala, Mana a se l-la, etc

(Though you be white in hue and me though there be not a spot upon your face, death will come)

CHAPTER X

How have we made through many happy years
A little garden in the wilderness
How is the home of our prosperity,
Close to the grisly lair's thronging mart
Its votaries are jealous for their god,
British it hath quick to low to fire
Be prudent in your love young men no madly
Involve us in your ruin

Unpublished

EDGAR FULTON drove into the hotel grounds near Lingam, within their wide enclosure, barely in time for tiffin.

Starting half a dozen hours later than Wamanrao, he had made less good speed upon the journey, which had taken him some fourteen hours. The humble tonga, with frequent relays, was a better instrument for such roads than the overladen, once dandy dog-cart. Thus looked battered like those who sat upon it. Behind perched Daniel, desperately uncomfortable, hugging his master's portmanteau. These items could more happily have come through in a bullock-cart.

In front sat Fulton, beside a strange driver, wearily urging one of Pramji's horses, not quite tall enough for the shafts. Shaitan had been left at the half-way place, as it was called, though it was but thirty miles from Kanhala and represented much the easier part of the journey. The black steed had developed a sprain owing to the excessive distance covered at a go, or so at least the Maratha driver sullenly asserted. Fulton strongly suspected that

the sprain was in Maruti's temper, or conscience, which could not sanction anything approaching a raid upon Mahadeo's temple by a European. Anyhow, the two had to be left by the wayside, to come on afoot as they could.

"That will depend upon the luck I have," thought Fulton. "If anything goes wrong, if I get laid by the heels, good bye to Maruti and Shantaram!"

He had not arranged his stages well. They were indeed excessive, as both of Ramji's drivers did not fail to remind him. The eldest of these had been left with his horse some sixteen miles behind, vowing an action for maltreatment of horseflesh.

"Never mind," Fulton consoled himself. "I never planned an elopement with possible violence before. I shall know better next time, even if it takes a few more hours."

He had subsisted upon thoughts of love, and the dinner at the Residency.

Many were his thoughts, and melancholy, during the second half of the night, which was not so bad, and during the endless forenoon of weariness, hunger and pain. He could not speak in confidence to Daniel with the surly driver beside him. So Fulton did not yet know how much of his love affair was known to his servant, who was quite sorry enough for himself.

He tried to think how sweet Betty was; but with less success, as he grew wet and chilled through the morning.

Fulton had pretty thoroughly burnt his boats behind him at Kanhala. No one there, he was rationally convinced, wished to see him or Daniel again, or to hear from them.

So even for this reason it would be as well to leave Lingam, if he ever left it, on another side, by another route. Should he leave in any peril or haste, *en deux*, it would also be well not to return upon his

footsteps, by what was greatly the longer road to a railway

Fulton was aware that most of the traffic with Connell's hotel if not with the temples, was kept up from the eastern side. On this side, not a dozen miles off, but over the border, was a station of the Mysore State railway, called Pidam. If he did half of what was hardly possible, he reflected, it might be highly convenient to have an inter-State border such as is not often allowed in India, full of obstruction, between him and the temples!

From this side it was that the globetrotters, and a very few others, sought Connell's hotel from hardly any other motive than curiosity concerning the great temples. It was upon this curiosity that the hotel subsisted. Yet Mr Connell, as Fulton recalled with a grin, anxiously discouraged more than a modicum of curiosity upon the subject, which might endanger himself. It was like the Sabbath in some places; you may have a good time on that day, but you mustn't have too good a time!

The globetrotters were able to reach Lingam from the east without diverging widely from the beaten track for tourists. During their appointed cold season they devastated certain parts of India as the fortnight's tripper's devastate the English coast during August. For the remainder of the year, as Fulton remembered, Connell's hotel saw only the most occasional visitor. * * *

If he could escape with Betty out of Lingam and out of Kanhala State—yet his heart quite failed to bound at the prospect—they would find themselves in a different world, much less jungly and remote than that of Kanhala. Mysore was still in many respects the model State, efficient although native, humming with the ordered prosperity which had been initiated by the English. It was the Canarese world, of good climate, with great stations like

Bangalore, where enlightened Europeans could choose to spend their later years Eurasians were almost catered for here there were special settlements for them

Stay, whither were his thoughts leading him?

"What have I come to," he thought, "if I can even contemplate a place like Whitefield? Betty is not of them, though undeniably a Eurasian. But to what world does she belong? 'Sugar and spice, and all things nice!' In an indeterminate world of song and romance, and, unless I am mistaken, of fine character Anyhow she calls to me in her distress, and that settles it But where to take a cinnamon girl to live and to grow old with after I have rescued her? She cannot sit on a chair and I know that she eats with her fingers. We shall have to find or make our world, perhaps best in Europe I have but a few hundred rupees in Bombay, and almost nothing with me My mother has always helped me and would still But Lor' if she knew the enterprise I was launched upon!'

Mr. Connell, a round-faced man of forty, with twinkling eyes, a Protestant Irishman, watched from the western verandah of his empty hotel He stood sturdily, legs wide apart, with the air of a proprietor He looked towards the Kanhala road, pleasantly shaded by *nimb* and other trees, but hardly to be called a made road. Along it passed duly spaced out, the traffic to Jangama, foot passengers and native vehicles, all bound to the temples and never to the hotel. He was justified in counting this his back or his jungle side.

The hotel was of considerable size all stretched out in one lengthy an extended oblong, which is a very convenient form for travellers' bungalows and barracks The chief verandah, wide and of the length of a respectable avenue, had been wisely put upon the north, thus enjoying such shade as is to be had

during three quarters of the Indian year. On either side of the dining-room in the centre were capital little suites a bedroom, usually large, and, beyond that, completing the depth of the building, the conventional dressing room and bathroom the entrance to which was from the south, opposite the line of servants' houses

The building was solidly constructed, from Mr. Connell's own plans, which he had tested to the laying of the last brick and tile. No wonder that his bright eyes rested upon it with satisfaction. The rooms were set open, in the Indian fashion, fearless of thieves for ventilation.

But even more tenderly Mr. Connell's eyes wandered across an open space, usually sun-scorched but now of a vivid green, to a bungalow of the usual sprawling type. *This was his home, the centre* of his prosperity. Beyond it extended plantations of mango, fig and other fruit trees, but chiefly kitchen gardens which were watered from a creaking *mot* out of a great circular stone-faced well of his building Without any special knowledge in such matters, but with industry, cheap native labour, and convenient markets at his hand along the Mysore railway, Mr. Connell had made a good thing out of his domain of some twenty acres

This was his real livelihood, and one which none need have despised. The hotel, as he used to explain, merely "helped out, like" The plantations and the 'market gardening' were a perfectly *legitimate speculation, long since justified, in which* anyone must sympathise with him. Under all the circumstances, it was not so clear about the hotel.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Mr. Connell "Is that a dog-cart in this downpour? And turning in here?"

As he looked, he recognised Dalton, coming no better form than before, although drenched, with two attendants of sorts instead of none

"I'm pleased to see you, sir," he exclaimed heartily. "Will you believe it, I've had nobody from the Kanhala side since you were last here."

Fulton, who had jumped down, and up the verandh steps, shook hands in memory of former cordiality. But he felt stiff and tongue tied.

"You'll be better after a hot bath and a change, sir. I'll have tiffin put back half an hour for you."

"Thanks. Give shelter to my cart, won't you? And let me bespeak kindness for this Christian servant of mine, who isn't strong. Come in, Daniel, out of the rain."

Daniel in truth looked ill, and was shivering. His master knew that such wettings can lead to fever.

Mr. Connell took in the fact that Daniel was not of the stuff of the conventional servant.

"He's not a Goanese, is he, sir, but a missionary Christian? Such are a little hard to provide for because they don't fit into any groove. However, I'll give orders to have him fed and warmed. Go along, Daniel, to the *bobert bilkhana*."

The last word, redolent in Western India of good savours, and of the triumph of art over circumstances, means the kitchen in the servants' lines. At it Daniel's sunken cheeks and eyes lighted up. Here was his life, his home, his sleeping place—where, according to the legend, the most admirable of cooks was caught by a fairy mistress washing his feet in the soup tureen.

With a grateful salaam, carrying his limp bundle of clothing, he slunk out into the rain, and around the corner.

"It doesn't matter about *me*," Framji's Maratha driver, who would not have eaten with his Parsi employer or with the Viceroy, was grumbling.

"No, I don't think it does, all things considered," Fulton caught him up sharply. "When do you return to Kanhala?"

The question was perhaps abrupt put by a man under shelter to a brother in the rain, who moreover had come afoot for at least a portion of the sixty odd miles

"And are we likely to start soon?" he growled. "Does the Sahib consider that with twenty-four hours we, this tunned steed and myself, have trudged some fifty miles, besides driving these sixteen?"

"I do not say that you rode *all* the way, my amiable friend; and you have a right to be tired Now smell out your caste people about these premises, after putting the cart under cover. Remember I have a present for you when you depart."

This was added as a retainer, not because the driver deserved anything, but because Fulton wished to make sure that he would not be left without some sort of horse to his dog cart in emergency. However, heaven help the lovers seeking to elope even to Pidam station with the help of the animal then being led away through the rain!

An hour or more later, bathed, changed, fed, his clothes dried by means of the useful Indian *shigadi* or portable brazier of charcoal, Fulton was another man, and felt only sleepy. Even his love affair looked more hopeful.

As he had resolved in advance, he now summoned Daniel for a confidential talk in his bedroom. Daniel must be told, at this the first opportunity, the important things which he might not know, a point which was uncertain Only Daniel could serve as intermediary, to go in search of Betty and to seek to establish communication with her.

But when the servant entered the room there was too familiar disappointment

It mattered less that Daniel's simple livery of white and red was not half-dry nor altogether clean But his eyes had a false brightness, and he almost fell over himself as he entered with the shambling

run of old time The reformed servant would take plenty of reforming and of patience yet

Fulton was so intent upon the business in hand that he avoided taking notice of his servant's condition, which was not far advanced

His long limbs at ease within the long chair, he talked away to Daniel, standing He told something about the miraculous meeting with Betty in that same hotel four months earlier, alert to see if this was news. From the open mouth that took it in, it apparently was. He spoke of Mathabai's visit the day before, which seemed so long ago, and of its purpose

'Perhaps you cannot understand such a thing as romantic love, Daniel. A native Christian is closer to the apprehension of it than his ancestors, but it will take him several generations of enlightenment yet But such is my love for this charming and unhappy girl, whom I was on the road to forgetting yesterday

Daniel did not seem to enjoy the bantering tone, far over his head, which his master sometimes assumed with him

"'Yes, Sahib?" as if to say, "Come to the point.'

"'In a moment, Daniel So here we are, within two miles of the damsel in distress who summons me"

Daniel could not say that this was a frequent situation, not always assumed in good faith, in the Sanskrit drama; but he knew that it was in his own grade of native life.

"I am well fed, and am getting rested previous to achievement I wish it were so with you, Daniel, who are less strong than I am You do not look half well? There was evidently liquid refreshment, if not cooked, ready in the *bobrichkhana*. Poor fellow, I wish I could send you off with a stiff dose of gumme, to wrap up your head a bit tight and sleep till morning. But fate, and my passion, forbid

I am quite forgetting to be a doctor, and have no quinine. Moreover the hours which are left of this afternoon may be decisive for Miss Stuart's future. However, relieve those tottering legs by sitting down."

Daniel would not sit at this stage perhaps feeling that he might have been asked earlier.

"*Sahib-ki hukum*," (command), he declaimed, in the fragmentary Hindustani to which he was liable,

"Here is no lightfoot messenger I can see Come, pull yourself together, Daniel" put your best foot forward I do not tell you to make yourself more smart. Rather the other way, if that be possible Discard the kummerbund and the red stripe in your puggaree which mark you however delusively, for a table servant Reduce yourself to your elements, and become again the more or less Mussalmani bagamuffin who sought me in Pulsipur last year."

Perhaps Daniel's feelings were hurt, as shown by a resentful gleam in his eyes

"Thus mildly disguised, remembering to keep as little as possible of the Christian or the servant, find your way to Lingam town It has been the dream of your life to do so. I have been there twice, which was once too often For all your stupid looks, you know as well as I do what would probably befall me if I went mooning about Lingam streets enquiring for the house of the white Murally as I am indignant to think my love is sometimes called. But, [redacted] for you though you have not been there before, you will soon be swimming about in a congenial element, like a fish in water."

"Sahib forgets that this is a Christian fish, who has been rescued by the merits of our Redeemer from the waters of iniquity"

"Tiddle-dee-dee You know I won't have you talking in that way. I'm not asking you to do any

harm This, specially if you carry it out well, is nothing that you cannot boast about to Dayabai."

But Daniel, in his facetious mood, did not like the reference.

"Sahib, please let Dayabai alone when speaking of Munalis"

At which Fulton laughed long and loud, causing Daniel to grow darker.

"You utter fool! As if, after the histories of both of you I may not mention Daya whom I knew as a little girl and a baby"

"Sahib doesn understand, many missionaries do not, how we black people feel in such matters. Ours will be a virtuous marriage as I am a virtuous man"

"You look it. Ha, ha! Long may you remain so It will be for your health Come, Daniel don't be a fool beyond what you must be Remember your many promises of gratitude Now is the time to redeem them, without any great exertion save to keep awake a few hours longer But every hour counts, while Miss Stuart may be getting into deeper trouble I want you to find where she lives, and get any news about her. By some heavenly chance you may even be able to speak to her, to tell her that I am here at her service! If so, tell her to be prudent, and to appoint some place, safest for herself where I can see her. I will drive her to Pidan station if she will come, right out of Kanhala State, so soon as I can get a fresh horse You are more likely to meet some servant of her mother's house; and in that case take care what you say. Go stumbling about the town the stupider in appearance the better You will be unsuspected and welcome. I will see that the purse at your waist is moderately filled The best that I dare hope is that you may run into some old friend of the gutter from Tulsipur or Kanhala who will chatter. Mind that you keep open ears and a close mouth."

"Now, Salub, listen to me I am perfectly istonished at you Here you are, putting your lirty and your dangerous work upon this rescued lave this babe in Christ who does not know his ight hand from his left You, the son of a mission- ry, are after a Murali That is the plain truth of it, nd you want me to act as a go-between. I cannot, or the salvation of my soul!"

"Those were surely heavily responsible who taught weakling like you to think more about his soul, han his conduct"

'It was not my Madam Sahib's fault but my own. Yet what would your missionary mother, who has borne us both up in her arms for so long, say if she knew that you were after a Murali, O Yeddie Sahib?"

"If she knew all she would bid me God-speed, of that I feel sure. For in this matter I am with her, on the side of the angels rather than the apes"

"I do not understand what Sahib means" Then, after delivering himself of much rubbish which Fulton was interrupting by an angry growl, he whimpered: "I cannot do what is wrong in my own sight. *It offends my conscience to have to carry a message to a Murali*"

"You have been taking *sharab*" (strong drink).

"Truly, Sahib, I have. And whenever I take *sharab* it arouses my religious emotions."

"I have heard as much."

"I like to have my feelings tickled in this way. For the moment I am the equal of anybody. Your soul is not worth more, Sahib, than that of Daniel, the brand plucked from the burning."

"It does not matter, I do not compete."

"It might be better for you, Yeddie Sahib, if you cared more for such things. For the son of missionaries, you are not a shining light Even a missionary in long robes, in full charge of a station, may be left

to his own course. I tremble when I think of the soul of the late Reverend Whitaker Sahib, the father of little Ruby."

A tear tucked down each side of Daud's long nose.

"Cheer up, old man. All your faculties are wanted for the present job. If the late Padre Sahib, who after all chose a charming girl when he came to the point, had not gone wrong, you would not be engaged to Daya-bai, with her tight little endowment."

"That is it, Sahib. I shall have to sacrifice my name by marrying a girl without *abru*."

"Pah! She is your superior in every respect; yet you get along remarkably well together."

"I wish I were in Halwai now, being nursed by Daya and her mother. It is all that I am fit for."

"I believe you. Yet pull yourself together. Daya, who is a good-hearted girl, would be interested to try and help Miss Stuart."

These reference were to a scandal such unfortunately unusual in the missionary world. The Reverend Ralph Whitaker, of the mission which Fulton had just abjured, the priest with one lung, had recently died at Halwai, but twenty miles northward from Imram, leaving the property in the newly built and consecrated church there, which was in his hands as sole trustee, to the father of the girl Daya, mother of little Ruby.

"That puts it in a new light, Sahib. So you think that Daya would feel concerned for the white Memsahib?"

"Don't you use that expression! But I only wish we had Miss Stuart safe in Halwai at this moment, in little Daya's charge."

"It was not a lofty aspiration," and Fulton felt ashamed of it as soon as uttered. Yet what better thing could he reasonably expect? He began

to consider whether Betty, once in his hands could not as promisingly be taken into the queer little native world of Halwach where there were at least friends, as among entire strangers over the Mysore border

Daniel, who quite refused to be interested on his own account, saw his master's predicament.

"Do you know what you can do with E-Stuart Missybai if you get her away from the temples?"

"Frankly, I don't, Daniel That may make the hardest nut to crack I suppose Daya's father, being in Anglican orders, is legally qualified to marry us?"

"I'm not at all sure, Sahib" Even Daniel knew that Indian marriage laws are not simple, and that Betty ranked as a Hindu

"Let the Reverend Bapuji Kaoji, negritic blackguard though he is, marry the two couples of us as legally as he can, and have done with it" exclaimed Fulton.

It was not a worthy solution, and he had only suggested it in looseness of speech. But for him it was among the surprises of the situation to see that his loafer servant would not be proud of such a combination.

Without dwelling upon this, "Let me depart for Halwach," pleaded Daniel, "so soon as I can find a bullock cart to carry these aching limbs, to the comfortable house to which I have a right of entrance."

It flashed across Fulton that, in a material way, Daniel, who as Daya's future husband need never lack a good meal again, was possibly better off than himself.

"Truly, I am not fit for this job," Daniel continued. "Sahib would do much better to employ one of the hotel servants, who are stronger, and to whom such doings are familiar."

"I don't believe they are, my friend. The hotel and the temple although neighbouring powers, do not maintain diplomatic intercourse In fact, it is strictly forbidden on both sides Any servant here whom I tried to bribe would be very likely to give me away to Connell Sahib'

"What that *soldier* Sahib?" Natives are quick to scent, or to allege falsely, such a reproach.

"Be quiet Daniel I do not see that I have anyone except you, who have so often promised to help me in such wise.'

Daniel had really made a very good suggestion One of the hotel servants, young by no means so guileless as Fulton supposed, would have done much better for him.

But he had always had the fixed idea that in such an emergency he would thus employ Daniel It accorded with his vague knowledge of heroic plays and of romantic situations Not being a genius, not able like Napoleon to throw over at the last moment an elaborated plan for something quite new, he persisted in his idea

"So I am to be sacrificed" whimpered Daniel. "I am to be exposed to temptations which I may not be able to resist? Oh what would our Madam Sahib say to this? And what would Bayabai say or her devil of a father who is capable of breaking off the marriage, alleging this against me?"

"You absurd fellow, the only sacrifice I ask of you is that of your sleep for a few hours"—he did not know how few "You will sleep off your fever to-night, with the consciousness of duty done. But try now to forget your own affairs and to think only of mine, like a good servant. Remember that the thing which cannot wait is to get information which will enable us to help Miss Stuart before it is too late You are in no danger so long as you keep your mouth fairly shut. Here are some rupees to

spend as may be needful. O be discreet! The red is to be removed from your waist and from your turban, remember. Now off with you, and good luck."

Daniel stumbled away murmuring: "Lead us not into temptation." It was half an hour before he departed for Lingam. He had removed his scarlet kummerbund as directed. But the red stripe of service mingled with the strands of his turban.

One more loafer to the many who continually thronged to the temples, often shabby enough, yet never having forgotten to put money in their purses—who would notice him?

Daniel and Dhondhu were two tentacles or feelers which the lovers had respectively put forth, feeling for one another across the narrow space which separated them. Dhondhu, who gave Daniel an observant second glance as they passed upon the road (but he none to her), he going south and she north, with an empty basket on her head, was the more efficient messenger.

Daniel had no sooner left the room than Fulton felt such a sleepiness as might have made him sorry for his servant. Though he could not credit it, he had not slept since Marthabai summoned him to this quest thirty hours earlier.

Throwing off his coat and shoes, and also grasping a rug, for the rainy afternoon had some coolness, he fell upon the bed and into heavy slumber.

After a couple of hours Fulton was awakened by little people in the room, and by droll, drawling, high-pitched voices.

"Why, we didn't know you were here!"

"Why, we didn't know you was here," amended the younger voice.

"I'm sure I'm quite equally surprised, my little dears," said Fulton, sitting on the edge of the bed and rubbing his eyes. "And who may you be?"

"I'm Susie," said the elder, announcing her old-fashioned name with satisfaction. "I'm eight years old."

"And I'm Lucy," said the other, equally pleased with herself and the adventure. "I'm seven."

Doors are as seldom as possible closed in India. The children had hopped in like two sparrows.

"What charming ayah and manners!"

"We was playing on the veranda," said Lucy.

"We were playing on the veranda," said Susie. "She doesn't know how to speak yet, she don't."

Yes, I do, Mister. It's almost time for tea."

"Then if you'll excuse me for a moment, Lucy and Susie, I'll just wash my face."

He did not know whether he would find them on his return from the inner room.

But there they were. There was not much to inspect in the bedroom, severely furnished (and that is all that is needed in India) exactly like the next ones. Susie and Lucy were inspecting Fulton's portmanteau and his coat upon the chair.

"Have you read *Susie's Six Teachers*?" he was provoked to ask as he put on his coat.

"No. Is it an interesting book?"

"Who were the six teachers?"

"Blessed if I can tell you, except that one of them was called Mr Pain."

"I should not like such a teacher."

"No, I think I'd rather have *you*," with a movement of advance which was irresistible.

"Please tell us more about Susie in the story."

"I suppose it shows how long ago my childhood was that I cannot. I chiefly remember a picture of a very small girl in a very wide hoop."

"A hoop to play with?" Lucy queried vaguely.

"No, silly, a hoop to wear, such as they used to have," answered Susie. "Please, Mister, did Susie in the book get whacked by Mr. Pain?"

"I'm quite sure she did, on the hand, with a big ruler"

"We get that at school sometimes"

"That's why you are such good little maids."

"Oh, do you think so Mister?"

"Call me Dr. Fulton will you?"

"Yes, we'll call you Dr. Fulton if you want us to"

Still the same uplifted voices, yet more loud, with funny little quavers in them. This was not Cly-chi, though perhaps robbed off from it, first cousin to it. Still less was it the speech of any class Fulton knew in England.

He had by this time moved the long chair out upon the veranda, and had gathered the children to him, at first with one of them at his side and the other between his knees, then with one established upon either of the broad arms of the chair, cuddling into him as hard as they could.

They were not really forward children. There was a quaint, provincial touch about them which he found pleasing, with their liability to speak in the plural.

Their round countenances comely enough, with twinkling eyes, showed them to be Connells. These were no Eurasians, their mother must be a white woman. Fulton satisfied himself upon this point by looking into their eyes and at their finger-nails.

Country-born European children these, lacking only the home colouring, being brought up as well as was possible in India, in a favourable climate, with no want of means. The danger for the country bred, as such are called, is the contact with nativedom, and the gradual approximation to Eurasia.

From the veranda Fulton looked to the Kanhala road, and to the bungalow beneath its trees.

"That's where we live," piped the little girls. "We only come here to play. That's our ayah at the end of the veranda. Her name is 'Gangubai.'"

To be sure, a native woman in respectable white sari, red-edged, was in the offing. She would have liked to resume charge of the children, but was timid about approaching. They, for their part, were not going to surrender a newly found friend for anything she could offer.

"And there's another woman whom we've been watching. Look at her standing there in the middle of the green on one leg like a sacred crane. The natives are such funny people, don't you think so, Dr. Fulton?" This one hasn't anything in the basket on her head for she tells us she has sold all her vegetables. 'Then why is she standing there?'

Why indeed? Fulton's heart gave a great leap. Half way across to the bungalow, as nearly as possible in the centre of a square, quite needlessly conspicuous, stood a middle-aged native woman described plainly a poor woman, in the grotesque attitude which was also a favourite with Daniel.

Turning his back on her: "This veranda must make a noble playground for you, my dears."

"It's better than the playground in our school at Bangalore."

"So that's where you belong! And you've been sent home 'in term time because of the plague?"

"How did you know that, Dr. Fulton? You must be very clever."

"Of course I am! Tell me all about your school."

And they chattered on; yet not untidily, and never at a rapid rate of speech because of that curious drawl.

Theirs would seem to have been an excellent school but for—and always excepting the girls composing it. These were of almost varieties of colour save wholesome English white and red. The few forlorn pure whites among the others were often under-vitalised; and were too apt to sit in the seat of the scornful.

"Papa wants to send us to Mamma's people in England," Susie explained. "We wouldn't come back till we were married, if we went so far. Is it very nice in England? But Mamma can't spare us, and it gets put off from year to year."

It probably would get put off, as is the way when one settles in India. Yet Connell too had shared the long hopes for the betterment of his children which are so often betrayed. He was a worthy man, whether or not he had retired from the army as a sergeant.

"That's my Papa coming along here," put in Lucy, yet without stirring from her comfy table perch.

"Time for tea," Connell said to his children with a wave. "Run over to the bungalow and have your tea, my loves, then to bed. I'm afraid my kiddies have been imposing upon you, sir."

"Not at all. I adore children, and these are nice ones."

"Very good of you to say so. Run along now, like good children. They don't seem to want to leave you, sir. Since that is so, I wonder if you would perhaps mind coming over to tea with us to-morrow afternoon, which is Sunday, in the bungalow opposite? Excuse the liberty, if it is one; but just in a quiet family way, to meet the missus!"

"Thanks, not at all, I shall be very pleased," muttered Fulton. He was keeping a weather eye on the sentinel crane in the middle of the green, and on the possibility of his being unable to keep this engagement, which he felt bound to agree to without hesitation. Connell too noticed the woman's attitude, a hundred yards away. Though one does not trouble about a stray native in one's compound he could not explain this one, who brought a certain anxiety to his candid forehead.

"You'll like that, Susie and Lucy, won't you,

to have Dr. Fulton to tea with you on Sunday afternoon, since he is so kind as to promise to come? Now say good bye.'

The children parted from their friend with hearty kisses—a thing which little Eurasians might have boggled at.

But Fulton was not destined to meet Mrs Connell.

He would not have liked to have anything happen to Susie and Lucy. Yet he was taking the most direct way to bring it about.

"As for me, Mr. Connell," he said decisively "I'll have my tea just here in my hand, seated in this chair.

He was determined not to remove his eye from the sentinel woman. His manner was perhaps too explicit for Mr. Connell also glanced at her.

"As you please, sir. I'll give the order in a moment." But he remained standing, perplexed.

"Excuse me, sir," he resumed. "You're not going to the temples to night, are you?"

"God forbid! I shouldn't think of such a thing."

"I am relieved to hear it, sir if you don't mind my saying so. And you haven't anything on there, have you?"

"Whatever do you mean, Mr. Connell?"

"I really don't know myself, sir. But the younger and more good-looking among the hotel visitors, if you'll excuse my classing you among them, are a perpetual anxiety to me. I'll have to give up the business: it's turning my hair grey. They're liable to dash off at a tangent after a pretty girl as if this wasn't the blooming East at all, but just a part of the United Kingdom. No more sense, no more discretion! The stories I could tell you, if I were sure you weren't going to make one yourself!"

"I shall be glad to hear you, after tea."

"In a minute, sir. I remember the last time you were here you alarmed me in the same way.

Do you happen to recall what I said to you then?'

"You said one thing which I have often recalled with amusement: 'They're lovely girls, but *you mustn't try it on with them*.'"

Mr Connell did not look amused.

'That's serious, sir. It isn't the morality of it that troubles me. I ain't the Bishop of this blooming diocese; in fact I'm not is that, a good deal bigger prelate than Dr. Wedderburn. It's the actual, downright danger. I lie awake sometimes thinking of it. There have been temple girls upon those premises of mine.' I know it perfectly. But if one of them were found here – blue blazes!"

"I expect it would be, eh?"

"Don't joke about it, sir. Things are worse now, for the hatred of races, than they were even four months ago. I often say that I'm like one of the Italians, who will build their houses on the slopes of Etna or Vesuvius, though they are sure to be overwhelmed with red lava some day. That's what the worship of Shiva is here – a blooming volcano overhanging us. I'll let you have your tea now, sir. But you won't do anything rash, will you, sir?'

"I won't," said Fulton, but thinking only of the success of his own enterprise. He had not been quite sincere with Mr. Connell, for the safety of whose establishment he showed no regard.

As he took his tea Dhondiba moved quietly up to him, as she might well do, either to ask for coppers or to pretend to sell something. She was observed, but it was without scandal.

"*Bolavatat?*" he ventured, in a low voice.

"*Bolavatat, hya sayankali*," came the cheering answer. "Nilabai, the daughter of Venubai, whom you know as Betty E-Stuart, will await Dr. Fulton Sahib so soon as darkness falls in the mango *rai* half way to Lingam."

"You good creature!" he cried yet without rising. "I could kiss you! I think you have lived among mi ion ui

"I have, but this is not the time to speak of it I had to attract your attention, but now I must efface myself. I am Bhanumati Mahanin Vembai's servant After an hour or two, when it is dim, I will come to you direct to guide you, that you may not miss the way"

"You blessed kind soul, I saw of you"

But he uttered indistinct for gratitude, while she disappeared.

CHAPTER XI

Candida me[illegible] [illegible]pit me flava puella,
Sed etiam in fusco grata colore Ve[illegible]
Ovid

(I love them all, whatever the[illegible]colour be,
And gentle Indian maid[illegible]e dear to me.)

DANIEL pursued his way to Lingam, pondering many things according to his capacity

He now held over his head an uncouth umbrella such as the people of India have a passion for. He was therefore not getting more wet, except as to his feet. This could not but be a memorable trip for him. In a corner of his being he was enjoying it. But his limbs also ached, and he did not feel up to his errand.

"Lead us not into temptation," he still muttered. Daniel's misty soul took naturally to the mystical emotions. He was a melancholy example of the mixed breeding which Indians peculiarly despise, even if it does not go beyond themselves

His mother had been a waif and stray, of unknown, but certainly the lowest origin. His father, a dear and picturesque old gentleman, was a sincere convert from Islam to Christianity. Here was more than enough to justify the apt, incessant taunt from the natives, proud of being in-bred even when humblest, of resemblance to the unclean mule, sprung from diverse stocks.

And the mule's strength Daniel had not. He did not know what he was, or what he wanted. There were times when he fancied himself a Hindu, as at present.

The last miles to a sacred centre of pilgrimage s Lingam could not be expected to be like any other art of the road The v t comes of the temple ose in the m One w s obviously approaching omething Beneath the umb trees the roadside vas spread out, and hu lly crowded, with little hrines, sometimes not shrine at all, to the glory of the Hindu god.

Shiva predominated among these, as was to be xpected Often he was indicated by no more than a roundish wayside stone with a dab of red paint upon it That was enough for his followers; it showed the presence of the divinity. They tried to pause for a moment if only upon one foot, to salaam such stones as they passed, only these were getting so numerous that the reverential wish had sometimes to be taken for the deed. No matter, their presence there, the way they were headed, the money in their purses, proved the reality of their devotion

Daniel found himself, somewhat to his surprise, falling into line with the others on the road, and occasionally stopping to make obeisance to divinity It might have been noticeable, he said to himself, had he not done so. But it was more than that. He began to feel the atmosphere of the neighbourhood

The mere stone, touched, or hardly so, with red to which to give a fresh coat of paint was an act of piety, was the most rudimentary form of deity, suited to the hedgerows and the fields.

Here, as one neared Lingam, were incessant temples of the size of a dining table or less They were built in some cases of granite, in other cases of some composite material which was kept neatly whitewashed. This was the primeval temple in its simplest elements, open on one side. Inside, in air folded even from itself continuingly, was the god Shiva does not lend himself to statuary. He was

most often shown in such shrines by the same painted stone at the inner end Paint was never lacking to him so near to his central sanctuary.

In other wayside temples, slightly more pretentious, he was represented by his favourite riding animal, the humped bull, the sacred Nandi These had to be very small to be contained within such a shrine, which often did not admit of a person standing upright within. When larger they stood, or rather sat, beneath the trees, on what was now turf, but usually parched grass. Being of grey granite, they took no sort of harm from the weather

The Nandi, the bull of Shiva, is the happiest sculptural form attained by the Hindus There is something singularly attractive about him, extended in the attitude of chewing the cud. Pleasant he is, "a dear" the ladies say, dignified and massive even when out of drawing.

Those who have merely lived in India love the Nandi; how much more the children of the land

Daniel felt his heart flutter as he saw so many Nandis, of all sizes. He repeatedly strayed from the road to inspect and to enjoy them, not forgetting to join the palms of his hands in reverence.

"This must be the true religion," he began to reflect. With the Nandi rightly goes a certain musty smell associated with the interior of temples.

But all the wayside shrines were not in honour of Mahadeo: Other gods were allowed their place. They too were in the Pantheon, they were not foreign to India. The exclusive jealousy of the Semitic, the monotheistic, faiths is confined to those.

Vishnu, the genial and gentle god of India, indisputably occupying the second place, was given a good showing He is much more varied than Shiva, having human sympathies and shapes. He was remembered along this roadside both in his

highly popular incarnations as Rama and as Krishna, and in his true form. That is that of a comely placid youth with nothing monstrous about him save his four arms, riding on his favourite vehicle the bird-youth Garuda. These variations were hardly made clear, so rude were the representations.

But even Daniel could not mistake the two animal deities. All children delight in these. Ganesa or Ganpati is a short round fat man with four arms and the trunk of an elephant, usually seated or standing on a lotus. There is a story corresponding to show how the elephant's head came upon a child's shoulders. This figure is often executed, with some successful grotesqueness, in rude low relief upon a slab of stone set up at the inner end of small temples. But though children love to laugh at his solemn countenance, as is quite permitted within Hinduism, Ganpati is rightly the god of learning. To him students, whose idea of learning is chiefly examination results, pray with pathetic fervour, decorating him with garlands. Daniel had always neglected his worship.

The other animal deity was Hanuman, the so-called monkey god, the langur ape, who helped King Rama get to Ceylon. Daniel was more at home in his company.

He really felt better, cheered, brightened up and encouraged. "To mine own gods I go." These were his old friends, for whom he had often yearned and to whom he had sometimes relapsed, as he was in danger of doing now.

He scented and he appreciated the atmosphere of Hinduism which he was entering. This was his lost birthright. It was perhaps summed up in the smell of the withered garlands of champaks and of marigolds, stiffly strung together, which hung about the images which had any shape, or lay upon the shapeless red stones.

"I would not like to prove faithless to Daya just now," he feebly reflected. "'Lead us not into temptation,' O Lord. My master, Yeddie Sahib, ought not to have sent me here if he did not want me to fall into sin His mother would never have done such a thing. So not a mile away are the brides of Shiva of whom I have dreamed all my life, but have only met a few stray specimens Those did me no good, to be sure. It is not I who want to go to Lingam. I was forced to come hither, protesting, as I did not fail to do Lord, how things come about in this world. The god of those temples which grow bigger before me must be a great god, rightly named. He does not prohibit our natural pleasures. My coming was providential. I cannot regret it. Since I have been led into temptation it is not my fault. I have no strength nor, truly, inclination to resist. Let me enjoy what offers, I have enjoyed so little hitherto."

It is easy to overdo the resemblances between the paganism of India to-day and that of the classic lands two thousand years ago. Yet they are pervading, and greater than many would think.

Ovid expatiates upon the comfort of yielding to temptation. But dip into Tibullus, with his lovely rural touch, writing some years earlier He makes a positive merit out of such yielding.

In the most personal of his poems, Tibullus shows what a harmless good fellow he evidently was, hating the wars, dear and true to his friends, careful to offend none of the gods. He is ready to die when his too few years have been fulfilled. In a couplet of exquisite cadence in the original, he claims:—

> Because I never could resist soft love,
> Venus shall lead me to the realms above.

In these Elysian fields dwell, with the poets, lovers to whom death came while they loved Among the

bad people in the contrasted bad places are those who have learned the divinity of love.

Such things are not only interesting in themselves, but most significant as illustrating a similar point of view.

Tibullus lived twenty degrees further north than the Hindus, among a nobler people who in his day were perhaps hardly dusky, instead of altogether brown. He was less crushed by the sun and by outward nature, he held his head more erect, he used a better tongue, albeit cumbrous and remembering its Sanskrit kindred. But not only on this not unimportant subject is his outlook the same as that of the Indian people.

The country life of Latium upon which he dwells, shows a similar attitude towards the godlings of hearth and of field, but more kindly there, as nature was.

Veneror, says Tibullus, he worshipped or salaamed like the Hindu of to-day, whenever he passed either an ancient stone at the crossways or a lonely tree-trunk in the fields, the garlands upon which showed that they were objects of adoration. Logs are not used for this purpose in unwooded Western India; while the existence of white ants would also sufficiently explain why not. But the spirit of the thing was largely the same. Priapus, resembling Shiva on one side, was also the homeliest sort of god, the *red guardian* of the orchards, frightening off the birds with his sickle. If he had done well by one during the past year it was only right to give a fresh coating of vermilion on his feast day to the face of his statue.

Tibullus loved his inherited Lares, the same about whose feet he used to run as a little boy, who had preserved the house in the days of his old grandfather, whom it takes some imagination to call up. With charming simplicity he tells them not to be

ashamed, *non pudeat*, that they are made of old wood. He prefers them so better faith was kept in the days when the wooden god stood, poorly adorned, in his narrow shrine

What was absent from the Latin faith until introduced from Syria and from Egypt, was the spirit of fanaticism Savage deities as savage sins, were lacking. There was no devastating god-like Shiva, who may best be compared to Moloch. So that however one may fall in love with the days of antiquity, and sentimentally long to revive them, no one save a born Hindu could feel so about Shiva.

"Shall I call myself a Hindu?" Daniel pondered "But no, I never dared to do that yet."

It was true. He had at various times tried to pass himself off as a Mohammedan, though invariably detected. But a Hindu was a different proposition, with that caste which must not only come glibly to the tongue but be a part of one's being. If not always an admirable, a Hindu is at least a delicate and a definite product of the weary centuries, not to be counterfeited

There was more than usual animation in Lingam streets. The people, though not as yet excited, were ready to become so. All had heard with satisfaction of the whacking which their prized white Murali, Nilabai the wealthy bride of the god, had that morning had from her mother, worthy soul. They had heard talk about its ostensible cause, and its hidden cause the Feringhi lover who was coming to Nilya like Prince Firoze on his flying horse to the Princess of Bengal on the roof of her palace.

By the time he reached the street leading to the bazaar, Daniel had decided not to call himself a Mussalman, but to accept the honour if put upon him. In his sad heart he knew that his speech would betray him, that he could not sustain the part of aught save the Christian nondescript and derelict

he was. This might be dangerous just here. He could profess himself to be, as he lately was, an aspirant for conversion to Islam. In one event could he be helped by the rest shame, suggesting table service with Europeans, and the folds of his ramshackle turban.

His eyes began to brighten at the sights he saw.

From one of the little latticed upper windows which play such a part in the ignobler life of the East, a bride of Shiva looked down the street. She recognised a long nose and a shambling gait.

"Hi, Putali, come here," she called to her assistant or apprentice, a tall and rather fair girl of seventeen also a Murali. "Do you see that fakir sauntering along, evidently seeing Lingam for the first time?"

"Do you mean the loony with the red in his turban, which is nearly coming undone?"

"That's the one. I knew him in my former life. Go out and meet him, fool him to the top of his bent, tell him that I must see him, with the usual story, and bring him in here. Then we'll have some fun."

"I will, mistress." And she ran, laughing, down the uncertain stairs.

Putali was both fairer than her mistress and of better caste. Yet they lived together without thought of such considerations, which were superseded by more important things. This showed how largely fanciful and personal was Vembuli's concern to regain her caste.

It would have been wrong to call either handmaid or mistress handsome. They were little more than the average young Indian female of the lower orders, the elder no longer youthful at twenty-five.

Putali ran up to Daniel. She did not throw her arms about his neck, for there is an outward decorum

about such things in the East. But she salaamed him with mock respect, and eagerly began.

"My mistress, who is more beautiful than the moon when round, has seen your illustrious lordship, not for the first time She greets you, recalling her former passion for you. She has so completely lost her heart to you now that if you reject her she will die. But, your lordship is too noble for that."

"Get out," said Daniel simpering. Then he uttered the equivalent of. "Whose leg are you pulling now?"

"No one's. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing."

"I am no illustrious lordship, as you can well see for yourself."

"Well, perhaps not. But the servant of some illustrious one."

"That's more like it.' He was relieved from the intolerable burden of making himself out to be somebody; but still held it in reserve to brag about his master.

The girl had already given a pull to the red strand, bringing down in confusion the entire tottering structure of the turban. The owner stood bare-headed, which is the shameful situation in native society, or outdoors.

"Never mind," she said soothingly, taking him by the hand and leading him along. "Now you'll have to come in I'll do up your turban for you, better than you might think; and I bet you never employed a professional turban-twister in your life. We're no swells among the Muralis, we're not. It's a comfort, after all, when humble folks can foregather. We are but women of the people, lovers of quite common men. Yet we serve the same god our more distinguished sisters. He will accept of our service so long as it is rendered with a pure

heart. Yes, and I tell you Mahadeo thinks more of us than of some of those with greater pretensions, like the white Muah who has made a scandal throughout Imgam to-day."

Daniel trembled at a reference which he dared not take up. Yet, if he had hesitated about going in he used this as an excuse to himself.

"I am actually on the track of her whom my master is after. I wonder what she has been doing? I don't believe she's any purer than the rest of them—yet meat for my betters, and possibly Yeddie Sahib's betters. Having come so far, it would be very wrong for me to turn back here. I am a faithful servant—though not entirely proud of my service. Having been sent on an errand, I must see it through. My master's is the fault if sin be done. I wonder who is the mistress of this chamber? Besides, there is the matter of the turban to get done up."

Aloud he said, at the threshold: "What is the melodious name of your mistress, sweetheart?"

As is so often the case, he felt inclined in advance, and on general grounds, to prefer maid to mistress.

"Ah, that you shall have the happiness of hearing when you look upon her moon-like countenance."

"But the place is occupied. Behold, a man's slippers at the door."

This is the etiquette of multitudes who have no morality. The thick-soled Indian shoes, of the shape of slippers, never worn inside any house, are pointedly left at the entrance to such a house as a sign of occupancy. A native lover will quietly walk away on seeing such a pair, trusting that similar respect will be shown to his own. Brawls are thus avoided.

Daniel had hitherto walked, carrying his red leather shoes or slippers under the umbrella so

to keep them dry But his feet were chilled, and coated with mud

"It does not signify," said Putali "Do you not enter by express and peculiar invitation?"

And, as things turned out, it did not signify

The room which they entered direct from the street was a native room of no size, with no furniture, with earthen floor and walls, and ill lighted. The only approach to a seat was an earthen divan or couch along one of the inner sides Cushions are not wanted in India. But at one end of this divan, which was of good width, was a bolster for the head.

There is, after all, a comfort in reaching one's own level, even if that be but to settle down cross-legged upon a cloth divan, recently smeared with cow-dung.

First of all Putali, stooping over Daniel, deftly did up his turban on his head, better than it had been done for a long time past. This was a process requiring some minutes. He was supposed to be shamefaced until it was over, and it was more polite to leave him alone Though he sat silent, he was aware of a dark woman in the room This was the mistress of the house, possibly still attractive by reason of her flashing eyes

When the turban had been done, and adjusted as jauntily as possible upon such a head, Putali remarked:

"Why, you poor thing, what a state your feet are in! And have you brought them in to that state all for the pleasure of meeting us?"

"It looks like it," said Daniel, with a gleam of humour in the faded eyes.

"Then we must wash your feet for you After that you will be more comfy, and fit to speak to the mistress as she deserves."

The two women, working together, prepared a

minimum of hot water, which is not so easily done in a small native house. This the mistress brought in a shallow vessel Putali, kneeling on the floor, washed and then dried the way-worn feet, very much as was done in Scriptura days.

In all his life Daniel had never had this particular kindness done to him Little enough kindness had he ever received until just of recent months, and this in the house of the truculent black priest, Bapuji Raoji of Halwach, who wished to secure him as husband for charming Daya, whom nobody else would marry because of her history. Some of that kindness was genuine; the family had fed him up, and made much of him Yet his tender heart had never been so melted as at present.

"You are not two Muralis," he blubbered; "you are two good Samaritans"

This reference passed over the head of Putali, who was going to explain that she certainly was fully qualified a Murali as any. But her mistress hushed her up.

"That is quite right, girl He means to express his gratitude after the speech of the Christis, of whom he is one, though he may deny it. we must all deny it if necessary for his safety But I understand what he means; and I remember bygone things"

Perhaps there was a tear in the luminous eyes as she spoke Daniel with his facile emotions, now sobbed loudly at what seemed a sentimental reference to the past, though he could not follow it.

From this time Putali, as was befitting, fell more into the background Yet both women, being so appreciated, determined further to melt their forlorn visitor's heart with kindness.

They saw that here was no lover, but a patient claiming attention, who should be in hospital. They noticed Daniel's cough, his thin cheeks. They

saw that unless by some great chance he must soon die of consumption—which was more than Dr. Fulton, not being a woman, had seen.

"He looks worn out. Are you hungry, Da-ni-yel?"

There was some far-off association in that syllabic pronunciation, but the patient, being dazed, could not place it.

"Who calls me by name out of the past? Who are you, O blessed *bai*, who are here as a mother to me?"

"But are you hungry?" repeated the older and the darker woman.

"Oh, am I not! It seems as if I have been hungry most of the time since I was last in Ha wach."

If this was so it could only be because he was too lazy to cook his own food, or spent the money elsewhere.

"Will you have *chaha* [tea] O Da-ni-yel? And food therewith? That will warm you up. Afterwards something else."

He gave an appealing, shyly grateful glance which sent them both hastening to help him.

Tea was brought, such as it is served among natives, always without milk, and in a metal vessel; and such cold food as the house contained half-way between the two principal meals.

Daniel ate, not very heartily, and was duly refreshed. But his eyes, instead of being enlightened by food, grew the more heavy.

The girls carried their complaisance so far as to fetch in a hubble-bubble, one of the complicated long water pipes from the smoking of which natives, and some Europeans domiciled in the East, derive a mystic satisfaction. A very few whiffs, within a minute's time, are enough to give strengthening, when your tonga driver, upon the journey into Kashmir, will squat upon his heels by the road, or

your boatman will step ashore at a riverside house, so lightly that you cannot object to it. It is but the passing of the mouthpiece, without ado about caste or religion to any stranger who is a native, which makes the freemasonry. All seven before you have fairly taken in the spectacle.

The hookah was beyond Daniel's customary indulgence which did not prevent his enjoying it at leisure. He generously proffered it several times to both the girls who took their whiffs, although the habit pertains more to the Mohammedan world. Then he leaned back upon the divan, inhaling the tobacco drawn through water, and contemplating the girls at his feet.

He began to feel like a Turk. Daniel did not even know that a Turk sat on a divan, in dressing gown and slippers—only that he was the sublimation of Islam.

"Is there anything else that you would like?"

There was already an abundant stink of liquor in the room. Daniel sniffed significantly.

"Some *sharab*, now?" pursued the elder girl.

"Yes, if you will be so good, some *dara*," he said politely, using the word more familiar to him.

"How our missionary Sahib used to denounce *dara*. But we have wandered far enough from his ways."

* * *

Daniel looked up, as simply as he could, at the speaker, who had risen to fetch the liquor.

His halting tongue could not yet name her though she grew familiar through the disguise of years. A slightly tall woman was all he saw, of full figure. Her face was on the blacker side of brown, with straight nose and thick lips. The eyes, which alone had ever made her noticeable were still effective.

Someone like that used formerly to flutter his heart? A bold girl with sensual expression while she should have been a child now grown hardened.

Your master is doubtless some great one among the Feringhis, is he not, O Da-ni-yel?"

"That he is, *bai*." Then he realised that he had made the quite needless admission, though it was obvious, that he was in European service. He plunged deeper. "My master is a Captan Sahib."

The woman's acquaintance with captains was limited. It was not so much that they were moral, but particular. Even in their hours of diversion, which were too many, they had no need to descend to her. She had once or twice danced in public entertainments at their houses. But intercourse with Europeans, save for some express purpose, was discouraged by the temple authorities.

"A Captan Sahib of cavalry," Daniel added owlishly. "Captan Malcolm Sahib is my master's name. He is proud in his youth and in his riches, being of great family in Vilayat. He keeps five chargers and a Vilayati bulldog, each with a separate servant to look after it."

Daniel had possibly consorted along the roads with the dog-boy of such, leading his animal forth for exercise, who felt that he condescended; but the grooms would not have looked at him. This hostess knew as much, though she did not say so.

"And the Feringhis think it worth while to support these Captan Sahibs at the cost of us poor people," she said, echoing a feeling widely spread.

"Is your master with you, Da-ni-yel?"

"He is not, exactly, yet not so far away."

"What may that mean? Has he come into our jungle with his lashkar of prancing horsemen? And, if so, where can so great a one hide his head in

this rainy season, when he may not bring his lordly tents with him ?"

"He is staying at the soldier Sahib's hotel, whence I have walked in the rain, as your kind souls know."

"What, with a troop of cavalry at the ho-tel ?"

"Where are you driving me, *bai* ? My master is at the hotel unattended."

"Then is he on some adventure. Which of us Munis is Malcolm Captain Sahib seeking ? Is it perchance the learned Tandan, who has returned from Vilayat after keeping company there with the rulers of the land ?"

"No it is the white Munih."

Daniel could have bitten off his tongue, which began to wag again with the liquor, when it was too late.

"Whew ! I see now. That explains many things A dangerous quest And he has sent you in advance, a useful scout to look for her ?"

"Not at all, I wouldn't think of such a thing, I didn't like the job when it was put upon me, I didn't mean what I said."

"Oh yes, you did, Da-ni-yel. But consider The white Munih is our honour. Not in herself, for she is a fool, but for what she means. Her fortune and her fame must not be taken from us That accounts for the whacking she had only this morning. Vemulai was amply justified, since the Christian lover is lurking so near."

Putali and her mistress exchanged meaning glances Something in the more vivid play of feature gave Daniel the clue.

"Surely you are the girl Uma Narayan, who lived at the missionary orphanage in Telsipur !"

"So be it. O Da-ni-yel, how dull you have been ! And I used to think you admired me."

So he had: the one fact did not exclude the other.

It all came back to them in a flood. Eleven years ago, a large period in their lives, both had been dependants of the Fultons in Tulsipur, yet with scarcely a chance to speak to each other.

Hira was then a well grown girl of fourteen, already caring only for the daily satisfaction of her senses. Shortly after she had run away from the premises which she had scandalised. She began upon the highways a career which was soon absorbed and made regular in Hinduism. She had caused no scandal as a Murah, nor felt any lack of self-respect.

The word Hira means diamond. Hira had changed much, had coarsened though always coarse in fibre, had degenerated while leading a happy life. But her eyes were as diamonds yet.

It came back to them both now, during several years, they had cast lascivious glances at each other on Sundays across the aisle of the chapel in Tulsipur bazaar, where they were ranged by sexes on opposite sides, and on the few other occasions when they were ever near. At least Daniel had cast such glances, being then in love with Hira; while she cast them at all within range. The existence of such material for missionaries to handle may give one an idea of the difficulty of their task.

But Hira had never considered Daniel. He was a poor sort even then, vague of eye and of foot. As he recalled these things now he rightly felt that he had never had a chance in life.

"Let me make haste to get drunk, and to sleep, since the chance offers," he reflected, "in order that I may forget all this, and before I do any more mischief."

"And how is the missionary Padre Sahib, who took me in when I was a starving child, and who was

a father to me?" asked Hira really moved by the thought of old times.

"He has been an inhabitant of Paradise these many years, O Hurmai."

"Ah, I am sorry. But the kind Madam Sahib, she survives, does she not?"

"By good luck she does. Where would I be without her? She broods over us all with the wings of affection, and carries on the mission work in Tulsipur."

"That is right. And the old man, your father, with the venerable beard, is it well with him?"

"It is, save as he is vexed by this unprofitable son."

"Do not grieve, Da-ni-yel," said Hira, with some comprehension from earlier training, of the point of view. "I have never been any good to myself or to anyone."

"I hope that is not true regarding your military Sahib. What did you say his name was?"

"Rogers Sahib. Colonel Rogers Sahib is my master, now stopping at the hotel near by."

"Ah, I see—wishing to abduct the white Murali with your valuable assistance."

Daniel winced. Again Hira and her handmaid exchanged glances wondering what sort of a regiment this blue-nosed veteran, or master of this weird servant, should command.

"I will tell you truly," said Daniel, observing them, and plunging blindly. "Do you not remember Yeddie Fulton Sahib?"

She did not at first. The name meant nothing to her. Edgar Fulton had not been in India during her years at Tulsipur.

"Was there not the cherished eldest son of our Sahib and Madam Sahib so called, who was then Vilayat for his education?"

"That is it, I believe you never saw Yeddie Sahib. Well, he has now been back for many years This is the truth, which I will tell you kind good Hirabai He is the Sahib whom I serve."

Like master, like man—the fatal corollary against which Ful on had been warned.

"And is this Sahib of yours Colonel or Captain or perchance a Bade Sahib?"

"Not one of all the three: he could never attain thereto? Yet is he a Doctor Sahib, a good doctor, without *nowkari*: and him do I serve"

Hira looked sharply at him, for he was drooping. The freshly made turban sat, as it was too apt to do with him, at a contemptible angle

"And this, if he is your real Sahib, is he truly stopping at the hotel, and all for the sake of a Murali?"

"He is, he is. I am not lying to you any more. Do not do my master any harm—though indeed he should not have sent me here. But as for me, dear kind ministering angels, do not ask me more questions but instead let me lie down"

A shiver passed over him. It was really the chill of malarial fever coming on. But he also made the most of it, in order to excite sympathy.

"Do your limbs ache, Da-ni-yel"

"Terribly, O Hirabai, as if my bones were crushed in a mortar."

"Then it is the *hiwa-tap*, and we must look after you."

Hira, having shown so much kindness to the waif, actually began to feel it. She was also desirous to show off, to remind Daniel that though she had vanished from his world in a little cloud of sulphur she had not done so badly for herself in the devil's garden, and to cause a good report of herself to come roundabouts to Tulsipur. And for deeper reasons she wished to immobilise Daniel for the next night and day.

She and Putali removed the poor turban, hanging it up on a peg They brought a cloth to wrap round the shaven crown and presently to cover the face, and they brought a drugget blanket of grey.

'There must be more drink.' Daniel offered no objection "Now you shall lay your tired head on this bolster.'

Putali, kneeling beside the divan, kneaded Daniel's broken legs and arms with tenderness and skill giving him the massage which hardly needs to be learned in India.

Who, under the circumstances, would not have fallen luxuriously asleep, although the atmosphere of the closed room was becoming mephitic?

"He is safest so," said Ilira, when she heard him snore She carefully covered up the last inch of his face A sleeping man on her premises would attract no attention.

Then she flung open the door, and called her sisters from outside

"O Chandri, Gaya Baiza Gozia, Malan and Lilloti! Come hither, all, and listen to my tale.'

Without giving away the sleeper, the tale was in accusation of Betty Stuart and of the white lover hovering near; Ilira had no reason to spare Di Tulton if this were he

"We do not wish to punish anyone unjustly, do we, sisters? Summon your lovers, house the tradesmen of the town We will keep quiet watch outside Mound Nilabai's dwelling If she is innocent she is But if she goes out to meet this foreign lover it is an insult to the god and to us, and the fire is on the mountains"

This was a popular drum it which was preparing, and Hari Pant knew nothing of it Shiva's worship is so broad based because it caters to the lust of

common men. There have been race riots in England when coloured men have seemed to meddle with white women The converse has been more often the cause of Indian disturbances than anyone knows

CHAPTER XII

Yet I will bid thee rise and speed
And make two lovers happy!
Epithalamium

"My gmflamon beauty, is that you? Oh, after so long But you do not seem well Come to my arms, darling, and tell me what has happened"

'Edgar, Edgar! It is only you that could now wait Oh save me!"

Even in that light Betty looked sorry for herself. She rushed forward, stumbling over an exposed root of a tree and fairly fell into Fulton's arms

She might not have done so of her own accord But now she was content to rest there, panting, done up

He felt her bosom heaving, as yet only in the effort to recover breath He would have been no lover had his arms not gone tightly round her shoulders

There was a scream of pain: 'You hurt me. Oh, let go!'

This might have been disillusioning, to a less faithful heart. Through the thick red flannel jacket which Betty had put on underneath her sari before coming out into the evening air, Fulton's arms had felt the bruises remaining from the beating of that morning

"Why sweetheart, whatever is the matter? You must get used to such things!"

"My shoulders, my back," she murmured,

ashamed. "Oh how my mother has been beating me!"

"Dare anyone mishandle you? I have come none too soon."

"You have lingered on the way, Edgar; why did you? I could not hold out any longer. Everyone is so unkind, except my Guru; you are unkind!"

With one thing and another, it was too much for her, and she continued in his arms, now sobbing vehemently.

He could not defend himself, he was so engaged in soothing her. The mere weight of the girl was something, especially after the way in which she had cannoned into him.

"There, there, hush, sweetheart! No one shall hurt you any more."

Instinctively he began patting her shoulders; at which there was a fresh outcry, though less loud.

"Why will you be so unkind, Edgar, now that my mother has turned against me?" But her head was on his shoulder which it just comfortably reached, her arms were clinging round him as if they would never let him go.

"What a time you have been having, poor little soul! You shall tell me all about it at leisure, Betty. We have all our lives before us."

"There is no time to tell or do anything at leisure. Take me away at once if you are going to save me. Oh, do not think me bold for saying so! But they have followed me from Lingam as they never did before. They are not far away now, though we cannot see them among the trees. But didn't you hear the crunching of that twig?"

She had raised her head, and was intent in a charming attitude of listening.

"Nonsense, it is some small animal of the night.

Who are they, *they* of whom you speak and seem afraid?"

"The women of the temples, who are angry because I will not lead the life they do. They began to watch outside my house this afternoon, they followed me when I came out, they and their lovers in black draperies, and beasts and shopboys from the town. I assure you, there was quite a crowd of them."

"And what did you do, poor dove?"

"I walked past them as lovely as I could out of my mother's house. They let me pass, and did not come up close to me. But they were behind me all the way along the road. Oh it was terrible, Edgar, and they are in the wood now!"

"You did so well to send that faithful village woman to me. But did you see nothing of my servant?"

Her glance of inquiry now showed that she knew nothing of Hamed.

"I might have guessed as much Betty. But we must have been sending messengers to each other at about the same time. You thus did her errand with some sense. She would no talk with me for fear of attracting further attention; so that I do not even know her name. But she waited about the hotel until it began to grow dark, and then brought me to this grove. She showed the very tree, this banyan overhead, which you had appointed. But on the road she would not walk with me, but some distance behind, so that I could learn nothing about you from her. On getting here she vanished, altogether, an old blind man and hungry children in her village."

"Good Dhondiba," said Betty, smiling with satisfaction through her tears. "She has done her task, and she has five miles to walk to her home. My mother may dismiss her for that if it is found out."

Dhondibai had indeed effaced herself as Fulton said. She would not pass through Lingam town on her return, since she scented some disturbance, but made her way homeward by devious tracks across the fields.

The rain had ceased, as so often happens, an hour or two before the fall of night. The skies were still covered with clouds, but because of the moon behind them there was no real darkness.

It was uncanny in that shadowy wood, particularly with the knowledge that a hostile throng was just out of sight. Betty shivered, and looked all round.

"Edgar, I am frightened. Oh Hamman, save me, you are a good god, a kind and friendly god, save me!"

Fulton, astonished at the inconsequence, saw her salaaming reverently to a little shrine of the monkey god which was close by, though he had not noticed it. This was, in fact, Hamman's wood. The branches overhead were filled with his langur apes, cuddled up for the night in the strangely human attitudes of affection which monkeys assume for sleep.

"For shame, Betty, and you call yourself a Christian!"

"I don't know what I am. I only know that Hamman is not like Shiva, seeking a poor maiden's ruin. I always loved Hanuman; and he will save me if you won't!"

What was this? To what confused world did she belong, this girl who disliked the fluttering dress of native men, who shrank from their vices, yet who seemed to cling to some of their gods? The thought flashed through him before he could be ashamed of it.

Here at any rate was a lovely girl in danger, who trusted him more than he deserved, who had appealed

to h'm and was ready to love him with the fidelity of an Indian wife. If he were half a man he must respond to the appeal, do what he could to bring her to safety

Where could he take her? Also nowhere for the present save to the hotel, to bring destruction there.

He felt that he had not time to turn around, to get anything ready for an effective elopement Reilly on the other hand, felt that he was not alert enough.

"Wait a moment, my darling," Dalton protested. "I have only a wounded horse at the hotel, the one which has this day brought my dog-cart eighteen miles, besides walking long stages yesterday. I have not made any delay. Believe me, and your grandmother said that it was not imperative"

"It has become so in these five days since Ajabai left. O save me take me out of this wood, for Hanuman is but stone"

So much he evidently had to do Before leaving the hotel he had taken the precaution to speak to Ramji's driver about the horse being possibly required for another spurt that evening. The answer he had received was discouraging; and, indeed, the horse would have done as well to seek the near railway station at. Dalton had thought of appealing to Mr Cogmill for a relays for any sort of an animal to carry them onward But after the conversation of so few hours before he felt that any such appeal would be worse than useless.

"I am thinking where we can best go. Would you like to make for Dalwadi, where there is a small native Christian community without any European? Or else to the railway station at Pedam, which is nearer?"

"I will go anywhere with you, Edgar, so that you will take me away from that wild beast at my back."

"Just a moment to consider." But there was not the moment which he demanded He was not nimble of mind, and had not Betty's reason to realise the danger. "There was much that we had to say."

But he was cut short. It was again, as so often, a case of "The rest is silence"

"Hark, they are after me, listen !" cried Betty, burying her head in his jacket.

In truth it was the loathsome sound of a mob, however small, of a tumultuous gathering of cheap humankind. Like a beast's cry, not very loud as yet, it came to them from behind Betty, and facing Fulton as he stood.

The little crowd no longer tried to keep in hiding. From behind various trees they appeared, approaching nearer, pointing to the lovers and gesticulating to each other. They were not as yet fully aroused, or determined.

Hira did not altogether, like Thais, lead the way to fire another Troy. But she was the unofficial leader.

"You plainly see them in each other's arms," she was saying, "the white Mulah who is too good for her sisters, and the Sahib who seeks to fly away with her money. They have deserved death by this outrage to Mahadeo so close to his temples. The faces of us all are blackened; but it is the god, our mystical husband, who is chiefly wronged. Let us make quite sure before doing anything. Let us watch where they are going, for they are in flight."

Fulton, hearing only a part of this, had thought it time to turn towards the road, leading Betty with an arm around her waist.

"Cheer up, Betty never say die! They dare not come any nearer to us. But did you walk for a mile with those bab s behind you? It will not be much longer. Mrs Cundell is a white woman, and will not refuse you shelter."

Thus he said what else could he say? He did not feel that he was acting as a lightning rod, to bring destruction directly upon the hotel

They walked along; the road like this They found it better not to walk fast, for when they did so the following crowd increased its pace more than in proportion, coming nearer. So they walked at a leisurely pace, taking, quite twenty minutes for the mile to the hotel.

For the most part the horde kept at a distance of some fifty yards behind them. The men and women composing it were not as yet highly excited, but were becoming so as they saw the direction which the lovers took From time to time the dangerous war cry broke out among them: *Har har, Mahadeo!*

As far as Fulton could see, there might not have been even fifty persons in the throng. But those who increased from behind, so that he could not judge. The end of the crowd, now drawn out along the road, seemed to come out with Langam. Like a waterspout, it continually drew supplies from the depths.

So the lovers moved, not fled, along the road Fulton had to support Betty, whose strength was failing.

Once, when the crowd came indecently near Fulton turned upon them. "Back, vermin Beware of the power of the Huts of Kaji!"

This is a warning which succeeds or fails precisely according to the prestige of the Raj. It has saved many a life in India But in this case it was answered with jests and with cries of rage. The

distance between pursuers and pursued continued less All had seen, and resented the way in which Betty had collapsed, leaning upon Fulton who could hardly sustain her.

It was getting to be a racial riot, always intensified by such a sight. The relations of the two continents have been compared to a vast interminable duel beginning at least with the days of Alexander, between the Oriental and the Feringhi or Frank.

The lovers moved on, past the wayside shrines, the daubed stones of Shiva and the Nandis with their benevolent bovine expression in the moonlight. To the southward the heavy cones of the temples towered indistinct, seeming to dominate the scene.

One of the more human characters in Indian history is he of whom the people still say: "Mahadaji Sindia made himself a sovereign by calling himself a patil" (village headman). In the flight following the fatal battle of Panipat he, then a small chieftain on a fine Deccani mare, was pursued in nightmare fashion by an Afghan, on a strong ambling steed. The mare could outstrip the big horse for a moment, but never escape it. Whenever Mahadaji halted for a rest, there was the Afghan behind him. At last the mare completely exhausted, fell into a ditch, and Mahadaji was taken. He was plundered, wounded so as to lame him for life, and left to his fate. He was found by a water-carrier who placed him on his bullock and took him towards the Deccan, and who afterwards bore the honorary title of *bhai* or brother to the Maharaja. But when this Sindia was lord of Hindustan, he used to tell General Palmer how, for a long time, he never slept without seeing the Afghan and his clumsy charger pacing after him and his swift Deccani mare

Such was something the sensation of inductible pursuit which Dalton began to feel.

> A [illegible] y [illegible] of
> D th walk in f n me dream
> And having [illegible] k r und w lks on,
> An l [illegible] no n e h s he rd,
> It can h k w s fr ph ful f n nd
> [illegible] D th [illegible] be and him t ed

CHAPTER XIII

Linquenda tellus et domus et placens
Uxor

HORACE.

(Earth and your home and pleasing wife
Are to be left.)

THIS was how it happened.

Mr. Connell, good man, undesirous of offence towards Hindu gods or men, was smoking his after-dinner cigar on the west veranda of the hotel, in much the attitude of half a dozen hours before. He looked, as he liked to look, over the gate of his enclosure, representing half a lifetime of effort, to the trees of the highway which led to Langam.

"I've had a good dinner," he mused, chewing his cigar. "So might Dr. Fulton have had if he hadn't been such a darned fool. Streaking off after some blooming girl at the temples, I'll bet. He seems keen enough on his feed, so he must have had some reason for being away at dinner time. Not many Indian hotels can offer such beef as we do. Pity it offends the niggers at Langam. I try to keep it as quiet as I can. But, without our own vegetables and fruit, which the globetrotters think so much of, the hotel side of the business wouldn't pay. One hand washes the other. That is what enables me to feed my guests so well as I am generally admitted to do.

"Drat that fool! A sort of missionary doctor out of service, his driver tells me. He'll have enough to do to look after himself. What's that

noise of booing along the road? And must go interfering with the girls whom Hindus regard just here as their peculiar property. That's what I can't make people realise: that this place is not as other places, but rode into ground sacred they call it. I'll have to give up the hotel line: it's making me old before my time. But then what to do with this leg-pulling uninvited lot.

"What's that noise, growing louder? I don't like it. I shan't be at ease until he returns. I wonder which of the beauties he's after? Some of them are stunners, no doubt. Such things don't trouble me now, except to try to prevent them. But I knew Dr Fallon was after someone. I can tell the light in a lover's eye, I can. Trust me, I've had experience.

"Hark, a regular roar this time. And upon my word that's *him*, entering my compound with a Murali upon his arm. Such a thing never happened here before, so openly. Damnation, how dare he? Followed by an angry crowd—as might be expected—bringing them upon *me*. I'm not used to much consideration from guests, but this beats everything, after my warnings to him! Who can the girl be? She seems half fainting. I thought I recognised her, but I could not credit such madness. That is no other than Betty Stuart, the white Murali, the mascot of the place, the special pride and possession of their blessed girls."

It was, to be regretted, that nearly the last words of Mr Connell's life, which followed were those of impotent blasphemy.

In the suffused white an onlight he recognised Betty Stuart, whom he knew well by sight.

Like a lightning conductor which leads thunderbolts not into the ground but where they can do most harm, the lovers continued their infatuate course direct upon him and his hotel.

"Damn you, keep off, go away" he shouted. "Do you wish to be our ruin? Are you utterly mad?"

But where else could Fulton conduct the burden which with difficulty he led along?

"Cheer up, Betty, we are almost within shelter," he was so inconsiderate as to be saying

The veranda stood high, some six feet above the ground below. Mr. Connell kept his post, with Fulton and Betty for a moment just beneath him.

Neither of the white men had any sort of weapon, even a walking stick In lands where there is any sort of personal danger it is so much more dignified, and actually safer, to be unarmed

Now quite close behind the lovers surged the angry crowd It had changed in temper and in composition since the scene in the grove hall an hour before. Earlier than that, it had begun with a harmless gathering of idlers watching outside Venubai's door unnoticed by herself when Betty issued forth Beginning with some two dozen, it now numbered perhaps five hundred who were being continually added to by accessions both along the road and through the fields from Lingam.

The town was full of the riot, and the worst elements were pouring outward to join it, The badmashes, the professionally violent and lawless classes, now took the lead.

Even this mob had so much sense of fairness that they waited until the lovers turned into the hotel compound before making up their minds. But the sight of what followed carried irresistible conviction. The people of the hotel must be involved in the outrage upon Shiva

With the entrance into the compound came the first unanimous noise to be called a roar. It was repeated and redoubled in the next minutes

"*Hara, hara, Mahadeo!* The fire is on the mountains!"

Such cries, which had already been heard spasmodically now began to be intoned together with others. Kill! Burn! Down with the Feringhis!"

An Indian mob, directed in any degree against Europeans, quickly becomes homicidal and exterminating. Such was its course at Vellore, and many times over during the Mutiny of half a century later. For it is to be feared that a hatred towards European rule, deep and abiding in native hearts. This does not appear at ordinary times, when the appreciation of the settled rule which Europeans bring overbears other considerations. But all else save the hatred is forgotten in moments of extraordinary outburst.

"Red ruin and the breaking up of laws." Within the hotel compound it had now become the mob rule with which the world is threatened. And it may be a matter to think out, whether this, or military rule, or priestly rule, is the more loathsome.

This mob, with primitive passions, had not primitive weapons. There was not a sword or a spear among them. Staves they had in the shape of the aggressive bamboo sticks, familiar under the name of lathis. Near was there a Browning revolver among the throng. But a good many in the front ranks had old army rifles. These, which were long to be bought, well hoarded, for something like five rupees apiece, form an irresistible temptation to the Indian populace. The Licence Act is complied with or evaded, under the excuse of sport or self defence from robbers, so that in fact a fair proportion of the people are found to be thus rudely but sufficiently armed.

Nor was there any who "seized a lamboo with zeal to destroy." There was not a torch among this throng. Incendiarism was represented by Japanese

matches, the worst ever made, and some from Sweden, which sold because of crude portraits of Shivaji upon the boxes. But these patriots wished to plunder before destroying

Tufton had managed to pull Betty up the veranda steps. He stood for the moment a little apart from her, as she leaned against one of the veranda pillars. He faced, appealing for help, the angrily spluttering Connell, who would rather have faced the mob, with whom he might have come to an understanding but for the presence of the lovers

"She has deserved death, true," the voice of Hira was heard. "But we will not damage ourselves by killing her. The white Mualı is a part of our *abru* Spare her beauty, which is wealth to the shrines. We will punish her enough by making her live as we do Piss her down delicately, that she may be taken to her mother, who knows nothing of all this."

In the twinkling of an eye Betty was handed over, by several men who had reached up to the veranda, to the arms of Hira and several other Muralis. Hira was exultant in the success of her small part. Her eyes were like diamonds, her heavy face aglow.

There had been a general understanding that Betty must not be hurt But as she stood for an instant among the other Muralis, she watched, bewitched, the murder that went on above her.

First of all she was aware of a white woman coming to join her husband in danger. Mrs. Connell was walking diagonally across the quadrangle between the two bungalows, and had reached about the middle point, where Dhondibai stood that afternoon. Her husband, who looked outward did not see her. She might not have left her children and ventured out like that had she fully realised the situation.

Betty heard a bang, then another, on either side

of her. She watched Connell, struck with two slugs through the chest, go in totter, reel over the edge of the verandah and fall in a crumpled heap upon the ground, muttering "Susie, Lucy," with his last breath.

For another instant Fulton stood there alone, his back to the mob. Before he could turn round he too was shot once through the shoulder and perhaps again. He also reeled off the verandah and fell in such a way as to break a leg under him. He lay out at full length on his back, close to the corner of the building.

"He has died trying to save me," was Betty's last thought. Love for the first time entered her heart as she fainted and was carried gently away to her mother's.

The crowd exulted in the fall of the two white men. No one had seen, it was convenient not to know, who had fired the four shots. "Now for the white woman who has so long desecrated our holy neighbourhood!"

This was very much to the point. In such it is the white face which is objected to, save for purposes of love.

Those in the front of the crowd moved upon Mrs Connell. They had not very many yards to go, for, with a strange courage having seen her husband fall, she still advanced, possibly not comprehending. Yet this was the death which had long overhung them, and had often been discussed between the two.

She was quickly pounded to death by the thick lathis and of course unanimously. Her white frock, disfigured with blood, was left gleaming in the moonlight, not far from the bodies of the two men.

At about the same moment the kindly ayah had finished dressing Susie and Lucy, who had been awakened by the uproar. "Come, my pets," she said, "we must steal away to the opposite side

I am a true worshipper of Shiva, but I do not hold with such doings in his name. Anyhow, I must bring you to safety first, and it will be a wandering."

The children were singularly good, because unafraid. Taking a hand of each, Gangu Ayah led them out from the back of the bungalow (which later they saw in flames behind them), through gardens and orchards which kept them shielded from view, into the jungle upon their own adventures.

Tranji's driver was never in any danger, since he could proclaim that his master was no European. With his fagged horse he made his way to Kanhala.

But at the half-way place he did not find his fellow-castéman Maruti, with Shaitan. Popular bruit had before that brought the news of the slaying of the white folk at Lingam. Honest Maruti, in his prophetic soul, had foreseen something of the sort that was why he had lingered. He now cleared off across the jungle to one of the lesser towns of Mysore, where Shaitan, though no longer young, was easily worth some hundreds of rupees.

Honest, orthodox Maruti returned to his village, where he lived in glorious idleness for several years upon this windfall. It was the direct doing of the god, he felt, in acknowledgment of his orthodoxy, and reward of his merits in former lives. Shiva had no more fervent worshipper in that village. At first Maruti kept silence, or told lies, about the source of his prosperity. Later, as was more satisfactory, he began to brag of the truth. He was honoured for declaring that his conscience was never at ease while serving Fulton Sahib.

The mob was disappointed in the plunder found in the two bungalows. Furniture which they could not use, a few hundred rupees with some jewels and clothes, made the total.

"We can at least burn the Feringhi houses," they declared.

They could, but they had more than a little trouble in getting the wet teak and masonry to ignite from Japanese matches. A few paraffin lamps, flung about helped things. While most of the walls subsisted, the house stood gutted, blackened, unfamiliar.

This process did not take more than an hour. While it was still early in the evening, the mob began streaming back towards Langam, a few carrying on their heads bedsteads which would afterwards make trouble if identified.

Some might have called all this an example of "the corruption that is in the world, through lust." But where is the mob that is not corrupt? As has been elegantly said, Put five hundred Lords into one room, and they will stink.

Meanwhile where was the Mamlatdar, the local official with second-class magisterial powers, representing the pious Maharaja?

At the opening of the riot he was sluggish and not ill-pleased. Presently, when he saw flames from the direction of the hotel, he walked over to Hari Pant's to ask what he had better do. The latter answered with some bitterness that it was too late to do anything well.

Thereupon the Mamlatdar mounted his official tonga and proceeded towards the scene of disturbance. On his way he passed the vanguard of the returning rioters. They hailed him with salaams which were only not menacing because they knew that he sympathised with them. They began, unprovoked, to intone the name of the ruler he served: *Jai Balwant Rao Maharaja!* Thus the State government was associated with the crime.

But the many-headed beast was sated with blood. The rioters began to disperse, with scattering cries of *Hari, hari Mahadeo, Swadesh*, and *Jai Maharaja!* This official was evidently of the sort which is

born to be disowned and superseded. In the hotel compound he saw the ruins, he saw the pitiful bodies of the three Europeans.

"Let the Mangs be sent for in the morning," was his chief remark, with a disdainful wave of the hand, "to bury the bodies of these unclean ones."

The Mangs, with their thick black features, are the scavengers of these parts, the only ones of the outcastes who rank below the Mahars The need to bury the dead swiftly is an outstanding fact in India

But before the Mangs could come in the morning there came, with the early hours of the next day, drenching rain which ended with sunrise The only wonder was that jackals and other scavenging animals did not devour the bodies during the night And in the early morning, spick and span, Hari Pant came walking leisurely out from Langam.

He had been genuinely upset, and indeed very angry, at the riot, of which he had not learned in time to prevent it. All had been so spontaneous, after the ways of the blessed populace; and no European aristocrat could more thoroughly scorn those ways.

It was the bludgeon instead of the rapier, possibly poisoned. "This is not the Brahmin way of doing things," he kept saying.

In some degree his thoughts were those of a European sceptic. He exploited the temples, which gave him such dignity in life that he could not but condone and even believe much. And the temples could not exist without the faith and the fears of the lower castes, as Christian priests are constrained to admit of the laity. When Hari Pant heard of the murders and saw the flames in the sky he even felt some pride in the effective methods of his flock.

"They should not have done it: this will make

some trouble for me. But there is no denying that Shiva is a powerful god still.

What Hari Pant feared was the focussing of publicity, however, upon various bits of the temple, chiefly regarding money matters. Betty Stuart was not the only affair, and the priests had not kept so carefully to the windward of the law as was sometimes thought.

Her estate, now thoroughly entangled with the temple accounts, was the biggest thing they had had to gamble for during a century past. On the earlier occasion, though the priests were then much more dominant even in India than they had, as history records, lost. Until Betty Stuart's affair, now in its crisis, was settled off, any outside interference was intolerable, unthinkable: it must not be.

"This will bring the new young Resident down upon us," Hari Pant reflected. "The murder of Europeans such a thing would have brought out even the late Resident. Mr Conrad must come to Lingam if he has the least sense of duty. And he is a strong man, incorruptible, worse luck. I know that he has avoided looking into several things here. But now, having to do so, he will look thoroughly, and the things cannot bear being looked into—not quite yet, till they have been fixed up. The State government is virtually held in my hand, though I do not always feel sure of the Diwan. But all that will now be swept aside by the British Raj, in a matter concerning Europeans, and Betty Stuart, who may be regarded as one. She is a finer girl than I ever thought until yesterday. The Resident may even carry her away as a British ward. That would be the devil and all, for my own feelings as well as the property: that must not be. I would for a lakh that the stupid riot had not taken place. It may seem to be for my advantage, but it's the opposite. Did I leave anything undone last night that I should

have done, for policy? I couldn't stop the riot of the low-born, which was like fire that catches from the sun It wasn't my business: I'm not the fool Mamlatdar" Nope the less, do I appear well in this matter? And, if not, how can I improve my position in European eyes?"

On the Sunday morning, with some anxiety, after the multiple ceremonial duties which he had reduced to a minimum and still regarded with impatience, Hari Pant went to have a look at things.

He turned callously from the drenched corpses of Mr. and Mrs. Connell. "I'm glad they're out of the way—eternally bringing strangers to pry upon us and report us to Europe" Yet the removing of them was not worth the price it will cost"

But something in the way in which Fulton's body lay out attracted his attention Among the surprising qualifications which were always appearing in Hari Pant were those of a medical man with the best Scottish degrees.

"The fool lover? A good-looking fellow once So Venubai was right about him, and I was wrong. I must tell her so, which will please her; but I don't want her otherwise Who would have thought that little Nilya was so deep?"

He took up Fulton's hand, which fell back less than rigid. He stooped over and put his ear to the heart, which still beat.

"Yes, the young man lives He shall do so if I can bring it about. Yet it will be a narrow squeak with both wound and fracture, and with the malaria, which he is bound to have, after the wetting through the night. I am above being jealous of him; and this will give me merit with the Residency. Lucky that I have Tarabai in the compound."

Hari Pant had not come out from Jungam unattended He sent men to the road to stop and to empty the first bullock cart which passed This

was preferable to a tonga to convey Dhon in; while the enquiry as to choice of vehicle was a part of Indian life, as well as of the situation in the jungle.

The next worst thing to sitting in a bullock cart is to try to keep pace with one. The chief priest, walking ahead, looked in at Venubai's door with a beaming face.

"How are we this morning?" But he waved off the gabble which would have come first.

"Yes," he said, "I know I know. I'll not come in. I only wanted to tell you that you were in the right about the Feringhi lover whom you feared for Nilya."

"How good of your reverence to say so. I felt it in the air; I knew that there must be a hidden lover somewhere to account for what was happening."

Her tearful face had lighted up at the admission though she grieved herself for a lover lost.

"You are wise in such matters, *bai*; and I wish that I had listened to you."

"Yet you neither came last night, nor will enter my humble dwelling now. What things have happened! Let us be thankful the Feringhi lover is slain, with those who gave him shelter."

"Not so, Venu. You would not wish evil to me, would you? For I am giving him shelter, seeking to bring him to life. The young man, comely one, is not slain, though unconscious and close to death. He follows in a cart behind. I am taking him to Tarabai, of whom you know, who has learned the Vilayati ways of nursing. Between us, with my knowledge of medicine, we may, or perchance we may not, be able to heal him. But he cannot be strong again in this land, since the fever is upon him; so there is no fear for Nilya."

"What a tale does your reverence unfold."

Venubai was abased. Her senses of right and

wrong, of up and down, of the points of the compass, were all reversed by this news. Hindu morality, in which charity plays so large a part, hardly takes account of the portion of humanity not Hindu

"An outsider like that, an unclean Feringhi?" she continued. "To take him where you live, within the temple precincts, where I am not allowed to go? After all the harm that he has sought to do us? Now if anyone else had tried to do this we would hold it sacrilege and iniquity, a breach of caste."

"Doubtless," he answered with an amused smile. "But cannot I, who regulate caste, disregard it?"

"You can, you can," she said, bending forward while humbly raising clasped hands to forehead. "Yet is it a misfortune the young man escaped? I shall not feel easy about Nilya for a moment now; and your reverence has said I was right the time before. Now if I had the nursing of the Feringhi *jawan*, whose breath is already upon his lips, do you know what I would do?"

"I know what you mean, Venu. But you would do nothing of the sort, you are too kind-hearted. We must improve the *abru* of the temples, which has been hurt by last night's doings, by the care shown to the wounded and sick Feringhi, whose leg is moreover broken; I must set it. But you cannot understand: how can you, being a woman? How is Nilya this morning?"

"Better than she deserves to be, your reverence. She was brought back unhurt last night by Hirabai and a rout of wild women such as *I* never kept company with."

"You must not despise them: they are your sisters."

"I know they are, under the great god; and I want nothing so much as to be one of them again. To think of my Nilya having had the boldness to go

with her lover all the way to the Peninghi hotel! And to think that I never noticed when she walked out of my house as large as life! But, then, your reverence had told me not to mope her movements."

"I had, I had, my good woman. It wasn't your fault."

"But Nilya has fooled us all. I didn't beat her again last night, although I had a mind to."

"Just as well not: it would have been too much. But, since we have seen how deceitful she can be, a course of the rope from you, in moderation, will do her no harm."

"I will remember, your reverence. That little girl, whom no one would have suspected of such deepness! Someone must have helped her reach her lover, I'm thinking."

"So am I. Has it just struck you?"

"Your reverence is laughing at me, and serves me right for my blindness. There have been messages between Nilya and her paramour, though I can't dream where she first met him. My mother, a respectable Maratha woman whom you have seen here, undoubtedly carried a message to Kanhala last week. Whom are we to trust? But there must also be some traitor in my house. I suspect Dhondu Maherin, the widowed grinding woman whom you heard Nilya ask for yesterday, after the well-deserved thrashing. She saw no one else for the rest of the day. It must have been Dhondu who, it now comes back to me, left the house with Nilya's permission too early in the afternoon."

"Nothing is more likely. Have you dismissed Dhondu?"

"No, but I shall as soon as she shows her black face. She lives two koss out in the jungle, and is late this morning, which also looks suspicious. She lived among the Chitris formerly."

"Some go-between there must have been. Take

care that this Mahar woman does not see Nilya again."

"I will indeed, your reverence. Nilya has been as a dead thing over night. It will set her up amazingly to learn that her lover lives. I have a great mind not to tell her."

"Do not try to conceal the news, *bai*, since it must come out, and secrecy in little matters is womanly foolishness. Neither Nilya nor his friends will ever again have satisfaction touching this lover, whose name we do not know. He is in a sad plight. Yama has nearly carried away his soul; yet will I do my best to recover it."

"'Is there any need?" Venubai ventured.

"There is more need than you can think, chattering woman. This murder of Europeans, with arson, has brought us all into perils which we did not imagine yesterday. Nilya, who has caused the trouble without willing it, must stand ready to help as she can, and to be obedient."

"She will be that if I can make her. Your reverence might just as well have come inside."

"There is no need. Take care of Nilya in material ways, as for the god, yet not forgetting somewhat of the rope's end to lower a too high spirit. Let her be ready to attend my summons at any hour. Good woman, no more. Ta-ta!"

And with his brilliant smile, and a little fluttering wave of delicate fingers not unknown among the Christian clergy, the dandy priest was walking swiftly up the street, strangely hushed after the uproar of the evening.

It was nearly midnight. John Cotsford, being studious, and not a very good sleeper, followed the habit of evening reading which never really pays in India.

The rest of the Residency slept on this Sunday

night, save for several who were paid to watch, which need not prevent their sleeping The master alone sat in his study, by the electric light which had lately been installed and which worked well, enjoying perhaps the keenest happiness of which he was capable

He was reading aloud to himself, lovingly crooning and many times repeating, the verses of Homer, and from the Odyssey He had come back to the words *ti probon toi epeita*, with which the battered wanderer, comforted in the house of Alcinous, begins the greatest romantic narrative of the world

"There is nothing like this," Conrad was saying "For the glory of sound, as the glory of words and of atmosphere, Father Homer stands first, as he is the earliest To think that these hexameters are older than most of the Bible, that through thirty centuries they have given such delight as this to all who have had the sense to seek them Not only for the great Greek age, which they largely formed, but for so many other ages, what they have meant To think of the rapture with which the first Romans who began to care for letters, the Scipios and their companions, fastened upon this treasure! The words, in any pronunciation, were nearly the same in their ears as in mine to-night, while they never had so clear a page to read from. Surely he thought that these words, unchanged have meant so much throughout recorded European history may well increase their delight for us Oh we are bats to read anything but Homer in this silent life. Shakespeare alone stands beside him. Dante, though he has the great style, the lofty utterance, depicts a world, and shows a mind ghastly less pleasant"

His heavy-jawed face glowed as these thoughts passed through him. But it clouded as he was aware of the insistent beat of iron hoofs approaching.

A big Waler entering the Residency grounds,

galloping to the front door along the gravelled driveway. At this hour it could only be an official messenger, and with something serious.

"Can they never let me alone?"

With a groan Corsand laid aside his book, the Oxford Homer. The time was come to close that volume, and perhaps another. The time was come to leave many pleasant things, to go out into a world very different from the Hellenic, to meet unimagined dangers.

In India it is not the jarring knock which arouses one in the night. There are always intermediaries. Corsand heard low voices outside, soft footsteps within. After several minutes, during which he glowered at a portrait of Agnes Grant on the table beside him, an authorised servant came to the door bearing an envelope about two feet long.

A great part of Corsand's work consisted in producing such envelopes, yet he did not care to receive them at odd moments.

This one, with a letter dated an hour earlier, was from the powerful young Diwan of Kanjala State, Moropant Ghatgay, C.I.E., a Brahmin very different from Hari Pant, and a remarkable character. It enclosed voluminous reports from the Mamlatdar of Lingam, of such a nature as might have been expected, woolly and expressing little, on the riot of the evening before. These were in the Marathi script, just received, and had been sent on immediately, with an apology that there was no time to translate and stereotype the contents, which were of an urgency which precluded delay in communication. Corsand had therefore to plough as he could through the loathed Modi.

But the tragical news leaped to his eyes from these and other enclosures. There had been race riots at the touchiest place in the State, the encroaching hotel was burnt down together with the adjacent

bungalow, Mr and Mrs. Cornell were slain, already buried, Dr. Fulton, wounded and in high fever, probably dying, had been carefully taken in by the chief priest whom he had affronted who happened to be the only medical man within sixty miles. There was a letter from Hari Pant to the Diwan, explaining how the riot was over before he clearly knew about it and enlarging upon the danger in which Fulton lay.

The letter from the Diwan was written in English, in a tone of equality which was perhaps justified by his exceptional services; yet the Acting Resident lifted his brows at the "Dear Mr Corsand." After resuming as much as could be made out about the riot and its consequences this letter proceeded:

"There is no need to express the regret which I feel at such untoward happenings. His Highness, with his gentle heart, will be overwhelmed with grief when he is informed." "Yes, when he recovers from his opium sleep," Corsand interpolated. "Yet the conduct of young Dr Fulton would seem to have been imprudent to recklessness. The existence just there of a hotel which openly served beef was also a criminal insult to Hindu feelings. Now that European blood has been so lamentably shed, I am in your hands as to the action to be taken. I will proceed to Jangun on behalf of the State should you so desire. I will accompany you there to help in any way I can. But it is likely that in such a matter, concerning Europeans, you would rather that I stood aside and left you to act with full authority as you think best."

The last was the obvious and the correct course. In all the correspondence the name of Betty Stuart was not mentioned.

Then did Corsand ragewat large up and down the room. In particular he cursed Fulton liberally and lavishly.

"The young bounder, the swine, the outcast! Only two evenings ago I had him in here, as I shouldn't have, discussing all sorts of things as if he were a *Pukka Sa-a-ab*. I must have been *hard* up for company Dr. Fulton told me of his schemes upon Betty Stuart, and I nearly went upon my knees to him to desist. It was no use; and behold what he has done for himself within twenty-four hours!"

He pointed with a tragical gesture, though there was none to behold, at the yellowish documents scattered over table and floor, a rain of ruin which had come upon him. It was certainly hard lines.

"This was my wedding week," Corsand continued bitterly. "It will not be so now Surely, as I have just been reading, the gods in heaven have given me many sorrows. I shall read Homer no more, have nothing pleasant in life again."

He smiled wryly, yet with some consciousness of humour.

"It is not as bad as that. Yet the lowest drudge is allowed the right to get married in peace, with some good will. The Jewish conscript could go home, and stay there, for that purpose I would give my third sweeper leave of absence to get married in, though I know he lied about it, if only he would come to me direct instead of going to Mrs Macgregor. It ■ only in our slavish service that a poor man is swept away from the altar, swept off his feet like this!"

He took up the only portrait which the table held.

"Sweet Agnes! Must I leave you? We have waited longer than most. Yet this will not be your wedding week. Let me see, could I not manage it by smart work?" "No use. I cannot reach Lingam before Monday night. And I was to leave here for Bombay on Thursday morning to meet her on Friday. It can't be done My stay in Lingam

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must not be cut too short, for there'll be heaps of work. Betty Stuart, whom I don't trust one little bit, is at the bottom of this, with Hera Pant who seems to have an understanding with her. I must look into things for myself smell out the iniquity and expose it. Oh, damn that fellow Fulton, with his coloured loves How unreal and unwholesome, compared to my straight, smooth, white English love, are his Chocolate or Cinnamon Girls, like some fantastic opera "

He looked long at the face in the frame, which seemed to smile at him and console him He kissed the glass before putting it back.

"We must do our duty, old girl. You'll have to land in Bombay among strangers, perhaps come up country for a deferred wedding I must send off relays, get the best night's sleep I can, and be off with the morning "

As to taking the obvious line of duty, he never hesitated He did not stop to consider such a thing as not going to Lingam, or even postponing it to his wedding. Had he done so, the eyes of Agnes would have reproved him Yet he did not plan to rush off that midnight, as a man of more feverish energy might have done.

There were letters, telegrams to get off. A good part of the Residency was aroused, helping the master An Acting Resident can make different travelling arrangements from a missionary doctor or even a Gosain bunker.

The Residency contained a comfortable family carriage, broad and strong This was without delay pulled out of its house, and sent onward in the rain, with several pairs of horses, to the half-way place, beyond which the car was of little use in such weather. There would really be no purpose in Cossand getting off much before noon.

All who were up in the Residency knew of the news

which had come, knew of the disappointment to the master's wedding plans. Among these was the severe Mrs. Macgregor, who liked to remember the bowl of chicken broth which she brought in to Corsand before he finally went to bed. He was genial to her. Yet she had distinctly heard him muttering:

"Damn that fellow Fulton!"

CHAPTER XIV

Alas, in one hour a walk of one week
What tragedy may be entailed!
Unpublished

WITHIN an hour of absence from her mother's house, Betty Stuart did the worst action of her life, and went far towards spoiling herself for ever. Those who afterwards cared for her had to do so in spite of themselves, because of some conquering charm of personality about her. But, although they might forgive her, she never forgave herself. Nor did she ever attempt the cheap excuse, for which she had more reason than many, of "I couldn't help it."

It was at the hour of noon, when most Indians have had a square meal and are settling down to take things even easier than usual for a while, that Betty turned up at Hari Pant's. She knew the way there familiarly, since it had been her chief resort, sometimes daily, during four years past. No place in the little rural town was many hundred yards from any other.

"O master," she exclaimed, on entering his study barefooted, "I've had such a fright!"

"You do not look the worse for it, my child. Whatever can you have seen?"

"The Sfeapwala, the snake-charmer in your outer courtyard. It always gives me a creepy feeling to pass him. Why do you allow him here?"

"Perhaps because I need him. What is the harm in old Wanbu?"

"I don't like him, I can't bear him, he has a horrid ruff of white beard around his black face, and such wicked eyes! Then the basket of snakes with him Ugh! I hate them I am always thinking, supposing one of them escapes and makes for me I should die of terror, I know I would: I should jump right up into the air as high as I could"

"Silly girl," said Hari Pant, his dark grey eyes resting upon her with amused admiration. "No snake escaped, did he?"

"No, Guruji. But they tried to, lots of them, I believe, and little ones. They were wriggling inside, and trying to lift the lid of the basket. I saw one murderous little head, that of a krait, come out for an instant, but Wambu snapped it in again with the nail of his forefinger, quite unafraid, and fastened the lid down more carefully Then he gave me such a horrid grin. I don't know what it meant. Why do you have such things on your premises, master —and Wambu such a low-caste man?"

"Because my thoughts are wider than yours, my Nilya I do not do it to frighten fools, nor yet because I love snakes. Yet you seem rather to have lingered near them"

"I did, it was some minutes before I could pull myself away."

"There is no harm in Wambu except as directed. Have you not known him ever since coming to Lingam?"

"Yes, he goes about with his disciples from house to house, charming away strange serpents and receiving tribute. Others do not hate him as I do."

"You are peculiar in many respects, Nilya—I mean peculiarly charming girl" His hand just sought a tress which had escaped from the sari drawn about her head, and she imperceptibly edged away. "Where would our village life be without

the snake charmer? The people like him, and he does not bully them unduly."

"Why are there snakes in the world, master?"

"There will always be snakes in India! Better make the best of them, as our Shastras teach us to do."

"My mother" said Betty, smiling, "actually thinks her pair of lions hold snakes bring good luck. She lays out milk for them: she would not be without them at all, only on nights that she fears. Yet would one of them, dropping upon us from the roof in the night, slay us less than a strange *sarap*?"

"A successful piece of free thought. You think too much of late. Has not your mother whipped you for it anew, little one?"

"She has, alas," said Betty, growing rueful. "These last two nights she has for all that you told her; and my shoulders ache now, so that you would be sorry for me."

Her shoulders were not liable to fall bare at present, since she had on the second garment of Indian womanhood.

"Poor petty! Yet I cannot truly be sorry for you, Nilya. It is true that I told your mother to desist the other day. Yet it is by my direction that she now beats you nightly."

"O Guru!"

The glorious brown eyes, in each of which a tear was brimming, sought his reproachfully.

"Yes, Nilya, I mean it. We shall have to use sharper means than the rope's end if you drive us to it. I would not have believed it of you three days ago. Yet so it is. You have been thinking to too much purpose, you have been a bold bad girl and have deceived us all."

"Whatever can you mean? Master, I'll cry if you go on talking to me so unkindly."

"You'd better! We'll give you reason to cry if we find you deceitful and disobedient again."

She looked up at him, then immediately dropping her long lashes, several times over, with a certain delightful effect. She did not look in the least sorry for herself, or yet repentant. She was too happy, exultant, after the death in life of the first night, because she knew that Edgar lived.

"I have not wanted to deceive you, my Guru," she finally articulated.

"Then you did it to some effect without wanting to, bad little thing. See how I trusted you, because I loved you. When your mother told me on Saturday that there must be a white lover with whom you had an understanding I made a fool of myself by laughing her to scorn. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"I am, dear Guru, forgive me."

But however she might say so, she wasn't ashamed of herself any more than she was sorry. Her eyes were dancing with some sense of fun, as well as from quiet happiness to think that Edgar Fulton still lived although ill unto death. He was here, in the same compound; and his life largely hung upon the favour of the chief priest who was his doctor. It would be well not to antagonise Hari Pant. But to this she was never tempted. She had known him at his gentlest and best, as he could be to a favourite pupil, even before taking a fancy to her.

Betty, though she resented his influence, found it impossible to dislike the delicately genial Guru to whom she was inclined to give all the reverence demanded by that sacred name of teacher. He had formed the element of enlightenment in her life for the last four years. Though she knew that he was misleading her on the essential point of dedication to the god, she had learnt so much from Hari Pant, spent such happy hours with him! So she tried to

think that while she guarded this one point she could still let herself be led by him He so excelled in the *suaviter in modo* that she could not realise his *fortiter in re*.

A dangerous situation altogether To her old affection for the teacher and priest in one, to the general desire to please the only one who was kind to her now that her mother had turned against her, was added a specific reason to placate him Fulton would not have liked it at all had he been in possession of his senses

All her love, since the Saturday night, was for her lover "This he did for me what can I ever do for him?" had been in her mind continually, both while she believed him dead and now that she knew he had some small chance of life

"This I can do for Edgar," was firmly revolving in her good enough little brain as she stood before her teacher. 'I can do everything, short of the great sacrifice, to please him, so that he may be good to Edgar and bring him to life if that be possible. I can be gentle, obedient, kindly to Guruji, so that he may do his best to save Edgar's life even if he favours me in nothing else."

It was a thought largely instinctive to humankind, yet peculiarly suited to the East, that of securing additional chances for the patient by squaring and by highly pleasing the physician.

"So I will be nice," the good little soul was thinking. "Even if I have deceived them, as I did not mean to do, I need not be disobedient any more."

And she tried to look as serious as she could, not to seem disrespectful. All her manner this morning was much more that of a child, of the indulged pupil, than it had lately been. A bird was singing in her heart; she could not take anything sadly so long as Edgar was in the land of the living. By discreet

behaviour, by the tactful wisdom of her sex, she might even be able to help him

"I am afraid you are incorrigible, Nilya," said Hari Pant after a pause during which he had pretty well followed her transparent thoughts. "Can you not see that you have been making history during the week-end? You, *you*, YOU, no one else than you, have brought these calamities upon Lingam and upon myself."

"Are you in trouble, Dada" (daddy)?

There was instant trouble in her voice and her eyes. A good-hearted child this, concerned for one who had helped bring her up.

"You would think so, Nilya, if you had heard the Resident Sahib carrying on to me an hour ago. He is inclined to hold me responsible for the riots of three nights ago, while acknowledging my attentions to Fulton Sahib your Ferenghi lover. It is the most if he does not accuse me personally of murdering Connell Sahib and Madam Sahib. He does charge me with holding you in illegal custody and with juggling away your funds."

"It's false, it's unkind it's nothing of the sort, Dada!" cried Betty, using the more affectionate word in her emotion "Why, I'd give you, or Mahadeo the last *damad* I have, and love you dearly besides, if you only help my lover in his great need."

"Perhaps," said Hari Pant, his face crinkling amusingly with inconsistent feelings. "You might be a lovely girl, Nilya, true companion to me, if you only learned how to think. Hold your head hard now between both hands, and make the effort, fly-away, scatterbrains Think, now, if you hadn't been carrying on with Fulton Sahib, would any of these things have happened? Would the hotel be burnt, its owners dead, your lover nearly as good as that, and the Resident Sahib brought like a ton

of bricks upon my head dealing our temple precincts and demanding account of this and that?"

Betty tried so hard to follow directions that she really put her hands to her knows.

"I suppose not, Dada," she answered contritely "It was my doing, my fault."

"Have you no respect for your Guru? You have brought it about that I have this morning been talked to by a younger man as never before, rated as if I were a sheep-stealer."

"I am so very sorry, Dada dear. Tell me what I can do to make atonement."

"You are at the centre of this murderous snarl, Nilya. I will not speak of your grandmother, or of other things bygone although recent. But you can at least be obedient!"

"I will be, I will be, try and see if I won't. Didn't I come just now in obedience to your summons?"

"So much you did, Nilya, nor can I think it was hard for you to do so."

"Dear master, how I loved coming here for lessons when I was younger! I would know each step of the way in the dark."

"Now you may not stay here, but must go on to speak with all in Resident Sahib face to face. He demands it, in the engaging way that we have allowed the Feringhis to use towards us, as a sort of proof that I have not swallowed you alive."

"What an absurd idea! But you cannot really mean that poor little I am to go to meet a stranger Sahib?"

"At once, or his sepoys will be here to fetch you."

"What manners! I know I shall hate this oppressive Resident Sahib. Don't send me away from you, Dada!"

"I would not if it lay with me, Nilya. But in this land of slaves we have no option"

"Can an Indian maiden be forced to go, immodestly as it may seem to some, to meet Feringhi officer who is neither married nor elderly? Such things offend our sense of *abru*"

"Corsand Sahib is, to be sure, youngish. He was to be married in Bombay this week had you not interfered with this and with various things, little Nilya"

"Have I indeed done all this?" she asked amazedly.

In a flood a sense of the enchaining of events seemed to come over her She covered her face with her hands for a moment

It was to be noted how much more native in all her ways of looking at things she was when in the presence of her Guru

They stood, nor did they assume any other attitude during her visit, in Hari Pant's library or study, the most European room in his large bungalow, which stood in grounds containing several subordinate detached bungalows. This room would have served a European bookworm well On shelves along the walls were some thousands of books in several languages, varnished to preserve them against the ravages of Indian insects Among them were many which it would have astonished you to find in that wilderness. Most of what Europe has written about India was here The really Indian portions of Hari Pant's collection, wonderfully copied manuscripts upon bamboo leaves and other fragile materials, mostly trash for the contents, were elsewhere.

He was beyond the crudity of some enlightened princes who will range gilded chairs of plush by the even dozen or half-dozen in honour of European visitors He did not attempt a drawing-room, an

apartment contrary to the genius of Indian life. But his study had a desk, at which he was capable of sitting in a chair to read or write. For the most part he preferred doing this upon the floor, on his knees. Oddly enough, he never sat at the desk except to write in English or to read in some European language.

In spirit Hari Pant ranged over a good deal wider portion of the earth than, one may say, most members of the Indian Educational Service, seeking to give his mind as many different forms as possible. If he was a less good classic than Mr Corsand, for whom he had that day conceived a relentless hatred, he was the more various; while his mind worked far more quickly. And, as Corsand was aware, he was not the only priest with vested interests in Lingam, of equal accomplishments.

Most of his generous establishment was inevitably native and orthodox. He was so much so himself that he stood before Betty in his own house, naked to the waist, showing a bronze torso of delicate proportions. Over this hung the slight sacred thread, symbolic of the ineffable pride of the Brahmin, the twice-born. On his forehead was the aggressive caste mark.

As he stood there barefooted, Hari Pant felt himself a good deal more than the equal of any Civilian, albeit Governor-General. He hardly stopped to remember how easily he might have entered the service twenty-odd years before, had not a more interesting career offered itself to him. Yet he had that morning been insulted, pulled about, rudely accused of things both false and true concerned with Betty's fortune. That he had done wrong in this connection was not for his private gain, and he was willing to bear the odium. What he could not forgive was the bringing of certain charges which could not be sustained.

Corsand was not an official given to overbearing ways with the natives Rather, he was usually the other way, even too acquiescent and sympathetic, because he understood so much of their point of view. But he so despised having had to come out to Lingam just then, he had learned such bad things regarding the misuse of various funds, that in his interview with the suave and supple priest he had let himself be carried away by the arrogance of his own service, those other Brahmins.

Hari Pant was never truculent, never disposed to violent methods, which he counted as stupid whenever avoidable. But he had returned from the morning's interview quietly, irrevocably determined that John Corsand, who knew too much about some of the temple affairs, must not live.

This was on the Tuesday thirty-six hours after Corsand had been roused from his Homer by the messonger from the Diwan.

Betty was pretty enough to eat this morning. Hari Pant looked upon her, taking in all her charm, which would be for him in due time, as he was planning things. But more urgent matters were to the front.

"And have I indeed done all this?" she was asking in amazement.

"You have, you have; but in kindness I will not enlarge upon it. Have you no desire to compensate, to atone, to undo so far as possible the mischief which you have done?"

"I have made a lot of trouble for you, haven't I, Dada?"

The grieved brown eyes, swimming in splendour as they sought his, won the approval of the connoisseur.

"Too large, if that can be," he noted to himself. "Let the Raja have her first. After that she will suit my purposes admirably, living here under my

wing Later on I may even send her to England, fit messenger to sheepfold Premuna Meanwhile I wonder what Govind will make of her?—he is but cold!"

"That you have child," he said aloud. "What are you willing to do to help me out of it?"

"Anything, anything dear Dada, except, of course, to become the bride of Shiva It is good of you not to reproach me"

"Are you willing simply to obey, without chattering, asking questions, or thinking that you know better?"

"I promised you the other day, Dada," she said, modestly dropping the curtains over her eyes

"Well remembered, Nilya. The time has come to keep that promise, which your mother would certainly wish you to carry out blindly. Now don't you squeal or scream or open to protest You know where Govind Sahib is stopping?"

"In the Mahatab's *kachhari* not far outside your gate"

"That is it, in the heart of our most sacred quarter. This Resident Sahib is *tahavari*, bad-tempered. His ruffianly sepoys even now wait outside to seize you if you make delay. If they do there is no telling what may happen There may be a riot—?"

"Oh save me, Guru! Must I go alone? Won't you come with me?"

She clung to him for an instant in a pretty childish fashion which pleased him, though he made a show of shaking off the plump fingers

"There is no need to exclaim, nor yet to interrupt. Business fast You will not be in danger if you follow directions. Yes, you must go alone to this oppressive Resident Sahib, who demands to see you without delay I cannot go with you because I have not been asked, and would not now be

admitted In fact, Corsand Sahib wishes to ask you questions about me behind my back."

"What shall I say, Dada? I'll never talk against you, because I love you"

"On the whole, I think you can safely speak the truth. The Feringhis have a saying which they have not always followed in India: Tell the truth and shame the devil. You do not know anything which you would not do better speaking out than trying to conceal. You would only make a muddle of it"

"I am so glad But I will never tell this *zulumi* Sahib how my mother has beaten me. I should be ashamed"

"So be it. There is only one direction that I will burden you with"

"And I will do my best to carry it out, Guruji"

"So far so good. Now, Betty Stuart," he said impressively, using the name which he rarely used, "you will be surprised But whatever you do, don't exclaim"

"I'll try not to. I mean to be a good girl."

"I know you do" patting her on the shoulder. "Look up in my eyes. This is it. I want you while with Corsand Sahib to steal some small article of clothing belonging to him"

"To steal, Guruji? You have not brought me up for a thief"

"No, it was for the other thing," Hari Pant maliciously reflected But to her: "Yes, my dear. To steal, to convey away, to sneak. And of course it must be done without being seen. You ought to know that it is not for thievery that I tell you to do this, but for some better purpose."

Betty had been utterly abashed at the first statement of the demand But her face lighted up bewitchingly at the entrance of an idea.

"Oh, for *jadu*, master! I know you are a mighty *jadugir*, a magician against whom none can stand.

And you wish for some article of this Sahib's personal clothing in order to help you in your conflict with him?"

"That is it, good child," he said accepting her convenient explanation. "In magic some cloth article, impregnated with the bodily odours of the opponent, no matter how often he bathes, is of critical value. Such would be Colonel Sahib's handkerchief, or one of yesterday's socks, or perhaps the tie which he has removed from his neck for the noonday siesta. He is cramped out in those office rooms, without what he esteems comfort. I have just come from there where I saw things, and the folding camp bed which he brought out with him. The fellow actually had the audacity to receive me in his shirt sleeves."

This he said, who at the moment had not a shirt to his back.

"Yes master, a necktie or a handkerchief or a sock. To be picked up as they may lie about the room, without his seeing me do it. You never taught me to do such things skilfully, like the criminal castes. What if the Sahib should catch me?"

She did not show the dislike to the job which might have been expected. Hari Pant was looking all the time into her eyes, influencing her. These had now lost their dancing light, and had become vague and strained.

"You will do well enough, Nilya. It will not be for long that anything will be missed. The Resident Sahib will not swallow you in any case, for he does not care for women. Can you believe it, little one, it is as your guardian in a way, and on your behalf, that he professes to send for you? But he dislikes you in advance, saying that I have spoiled you by my influence."

"Oh, but you haven't, Dada, it is wrong to say that."

The words were affectionately loyal still; but all spirit seemed to have gone out of the girl.

"That is right, Nilya," with his old bright smile which seemed to pull her together somewhat, and to inspire her. "But now you had better get along for what must be done"

The point had been conceded without the discussion which he dreaded. But still Nilya lingered. She wanted her little treat, her reward for agreeing to the theft. This was, to be allowed at least to talk about her lover

"And you will be good to *him*, will you not, Guruji?"

This she said in quite a different manner, with womanly consciousness, using the plural form in which Indian women refer to their husbands, and pulling her sari around to shield a glowing face.

Betty had been long in bringing herself to this, wondering if it would be safe, or best. But she felt that she could not go away without some news of Fulton or at least the effort to obtain it In return for what she had granted she had the right to put in a word for him

Hari Pant rose to the occasion He was not small-minded; and many things relating to love are differently regarded at the temples, and in Europe. For that matter, Fulton was so completely out of the running that no one need be jealous of him

So with a smile of good will which gave her courage, he responded

"I am not Dr. Fulton's enemy, dear girl. He is that himself; but we will let it pass. I will do my best for him, you may rest assured. He is no better this morning It is not at all certain that Tarabai and I together can bring him to life again without either of us he is lost He will not recover consciousness for some weeks in any case. When he does, if he does, he will not again have the health

to live in India. That will also be the best solution for some other reasons, supposing Dr Fulton recovers. All the votaries of Shiva are not so forgiving as myself, 'bear chief in fact a pain's"

It was a study, which Hari Pant quite appreciated, to watch Betty's quivering face

"So, since there can be no future for you two here," he continued, "I can respect your sentiment for the young man. I have avoided speaking of him hitherto. You will find that he lacks friends. Mr. Corsand is very angry with him. It may turn out that I am the best friend he has There, now, for your sake, Betty, I will try to be Besides, we belong to the same profession who do not quarrel like some others. As the Europhis say, Dog does not eat dog. Would you like to see Dr. Fulton?"

Betty who was tottering from the heavy news, brightened anew at the kindly offer,

"Oh, if you would!" was all she could say from quivering lips which had suddenly grown parched

Taking her by the hand he led her out of the large bungalow to quite a small isolated one at an angle from it. This bungalow was low, had but two apartments in it, the cooking being done outside, and was overshadowed by a noble banyan. It was Tarabai's house; and one side of it was devoted to her patient.

On a neat cot lay Fulton in the resting place, the passing of his fortunes.

Handsome he was still, Betty thought, but so weak and changed within three days In the background she was aware of a beautiful woman, much older than herself, perhaps even twenty-five, with a complexion of the lightest brown suggesting bamboo matting, and with lustrous eyes, and clinging draperies, different from the usual sari, who simply stood and smiled, without speaking.

From the cloudland where his spirit wandered

Fulton returned for an instant. He opened his brown eyes full upon Betty at the foot of the cot, then closed them in weariness.

"Come along," said Hari Pant, softly. "He does not know you."

But Betty tried to cling to the idea that perhaps he did know her.

When they were outside Hari Pant said, "Now you must be getting along. Do not forget what you have promised to steal for the *jadu* of which you know. You need not be frightened if you find the snake-charmer still squatting outside. There's no harm in old Wambu."

Corsand, a couple of hundred yards away, in the official buildings of the place, was fretting he hardly know why.

As Hari Pant had said, he was not comfortable there. With the hotel gone, and with no chance of pitching tents in the rain, a Sahib had not where to lay his head As officials can do, Corsand had taken possession of the *katcheri* of the Mamlatdar, who was in disgrace for his inept proceedings The apartment in which Corsand had slept the night before, and had his two breakfasts that morning was the court-room of Lingam, quite unsuited to such purposes Things were not tidy here They very often are not, even in the rightful bedrooms of the rulers of India, if unmarried.

Corsand was prowling about the awkward premises like an uneasy spirit

"Why doesn't the worthless girl come, the Helen who has fired this Troy? Then I can lie down, as I feel the need of doing The long drive out was too much for me yesterday Otherwise, this place is not supposed to be feverish Though I don't believe Miss Betty Stuart to be any better than she ought to be, I'll be fair to her, and not frighten her."

At the outer door he turned upon two sepoys,

really State policemen, who were lounging there in attendance upon him.

'Here be off, go and see why the Munali Nilabai, whom I have summoned, does not come.'

He remained looking up at the grey skies, quite like those of Europe if they could but rest. But like nothing in Europe was the effect of the prodigious temples, in the midst of which he was, quite close to them and unnoticed by them though all the power which he represented could not have forced an entrance for him. It did not strike him that he had come too close to the abode of Shiva. Instead, he reluctantly felt the magnificence of the oppressive pylons, of the pyramidal towers which were airy while so heavy.

'*Regalque situ pyramidum altius*,' he murmured. "I find now they were so grand. I don't want to interfere with their religion which must have had good architects in the past; I hope they don't think I want to. But force and fraud and murder are a different thing. I *must* interfere when these are applied to Europeans. I am sorry for Dr. Fulton, who asked for all that he got, and whose life now hangs upon the favour of a Hindu priest who is also an Edinburgh graduate. I would have asked Hari Pant for a febrifuge myself, but it would have been *infra dig.*, with the work I have to do. My heart bleeds for the poor Connell family. Thank heaven the little girls with the droll names, Susie and Lucy, are safe on Mysore. I'll take care to get good compensation for them from the heathen!"

His eyes fell upon Betty being brought towards him between the two skimpy policemen, who had not let her get the way. They did not touch her, but she sufficiently felt the disgrace of her position.

'Now tastes may differ,' Cosmo reflected. "This may be a perfect beauty which is bearing down upon me. But, as for me, give me English pink and

white, as best shown in my sweet girl who is nearing India knowing nothing of all these things. Dear Agnes."

He turned around, looking for the photograph which he had omitted to bring.

"Let me see, this is Tuesday. Could I not push through my work here, without scamping it, in the next day and a half? If I *could* finish here on Wednesday, get back to Kanhala during the night, and onward, I might still keep to the programme. But that would be cutting it too close; it isn't likely to come off. If I could reach Bombay only one day late, that would be better than nothing; and I'll have a try for it. I'm getting ahead with the investigation quicker than I expected. Hari Pant is clearly guilty on several technical points, however careful he's been. It will be my duty and my pleasure to run him in. I believe he's afraid of me—an interesting man, could I have known him differently. So here you are, Betty Stuart. Come inside, will you?"

He spoke to her in Marathi he did not realise how gruffly. In truth he did not know how to address her, she was such an anomaly. He did not know whether to offer her a chair, so left her standing before him while he stretched himself out in the only long chair.

Betty was not half so pretty as a little before. She was depressed by what she had seen of Fulton's condition, and the bird of hope no longer sang in her heart. She was sullen, if she could be that, certainly frightened, at the way in which she had been brought there. The undesirable element of slyness had also been imported into their relations. Betty was looking furtively about the room in search of small articles of clothing. They had been left lying about exactly as described to her.

So it was not to be expected that the conversation

between them should flourish. Corsand kept her to Marathi not knowing what pretty English she spoke. She was naturally enough upon the defensive.

He made several fumbling enquiries about her money affairs. She stared with genuine stupidity upon this subject. Corsand began to notice that she did a good deal of staring, that her eyes looked vague and strained, like those of an hypnotic subject.

"Will you tell me quite plainly, Nilabai, do you think that any of your money has been tampered with? I only wish to help you in this matter."

"What do I know of money, O Sahib? I have not handled it, save sometimes from my mother's hand, to buy fruit in the bazar."

Conversation, for sufficient reasons, would not flow between them. She would not communicate freely with him because she did not trust him. He as little trusted her. He would have thought himself justified, for he noticed the vague eyes fasten upon a blue silk tie, recently removed from his throat, on a small table in the background.

Had everything been a week later, had Agnes then perhaps been with him, all things might have turned out differently.

From natural discretion, and also from an infinite distaste to the subject, Corsand did not mention Tilton or reproach her about him.

Remember that I am here to protect you if you need protection," he said with due sense of justice, but stiffly. "Look upon me as a father, O Nilabai, and speak freely. If you have any complaints to make, now is the time to make them. The Kanhala Residency looks kindly upon you as the daughter of a British officer."

Betty was mentally repudiating the offered protection from one she disliked. Her attitude was

essentially: "If I were a-hungered I would not have told thee."

"Do you get enough to eat?" he pertinently asked.

She certainly looked as if she did. A naughty smile was her only answer.

"Do you have kindness in the house from your mother? Does she force your will in anything?"

"A more tender mother there never was. What are these things to you, O Sahib?"

"She thinks me the most intolerable meddling fool," Corsand reflected. "I really cannot wonder."

Yet his jaw was glumly set, showing how he had omitted to shave after the previous day's journey.

"Once more, Betty Stuart, if I may try to help you against your will. Have you any complaints to make against Hari Pant?"

"My Guru?" she cried out indignantly. "He's the only friend I have!"

"A damned sight better friend than you!" was plainly meant. Her attitude was that of Asia to Europe, of India to us. "Hands off!" and "A stranger intermeddleth not with the joy thereof."

But Betty lost her chance of parting with dignity. Instead of clearing out with effect, she began wandering about the room with weak curiosity, like the little Connells in Fulton's bedroom, like a villager inside a bungalow who cannot resist inspecting things.

It was not really that, but she sought to give it that appearance in the hope of covering what she was after.

If Corsand had the worst opinion of her, she now justified it in his eyes.

Picking up and laying down one and another little thing, she had approached the small table. Glancing around to see if she was seen, she snatched at the silk tie and hid it within her *topi*.

Corsund saw what she had done. In utter contempt he let the [redacted] tion pass only anxious to be rid of her, regarding her as a Eurasian freak whose better acquaintance he did not desire never seeking to fathom the motive for a sneak thief in one richer than himself

"Permission!" he bawled, and she was ushered out.

"Now clear out, all of you!" he said to the attendants. "I have a touch of fever, and want a snooze."

Betty, dazed and unhappy, made her way back to Hari Pant's and passed him the article she had snaked. As she went in and out the old snake charmer, now seated on the verandah of the main bungalow, grinned at her disquietingly. She did not know what she had done.

For we have sold the Gold at Land
Where the Lower of Darkness range.

CHAPTER XV

No wonder that my zeal is great
For the religion I command,
Or that I seek to emulate
The Rishis of our earlier land
King nor Feringhi can withs and
The terror of a Brahmin's curse
I hold men's souls in my right hand
The centre of the universe
The Brahmin, a poem Unpublished.

THE most astonishing feature of the crime was the openness with which the details were carried out.

No one would scrutinise what so trusted a chief priest, credited with powers beyond ordinary comprehension, might choose to do without appearance of concealment. Hari Pant knew that the way to arouse factious curiosity was to seem to hide anything. Even that might have been allowed to him here, upon Brahminic ground; but it was safer not to risk it.

So he stood out unconcealed, clad chiefly in his sacred thread, in a quarter sheltered from the prevailing south-west wind of the Monsoon, close to a side verandah, over an iron pot with a tin lid which was set over a fire of twigs between three large stones, the primitive fire-place which still does most of the cooking of India. Across from him crouched upon the ground old Wambu the town *nagwala* or serpent-man. Nobody minded him, where he went or what he did. It was usually for a beneficent purpose, to charm snakes out of people's houses, though he was capable of depositing them there in advance.

As soon as Betty left Hari Pant for the second time within the hour, after passing to him the thick tie which had been around Corsand's neck during the forenoon, this went into the iron pot. After it went, carefully transferred by Wambu's immune fingers, some twenty of the kraits, the small snakes so deadly from Bengal to Bombay. They are seldom more than seven inches long · unspeakably ghastly threads of death. They are curiously marked in variations of white and of chocolate colour. They love to lie upon the low branch of a tree which they resemble in colour, until you lay your hand upon it: thus is a danger even at Mahableshwar.

None would give thought to what was being done with these kraits in a land where, by public sentiment, you may commit any cruelty upon animals, but may not put them to death. Snakes of all kinds stand somewhat apart from the animal kingdom as being intangible, not exactly uncanny as in Europe, but the objects of a propitiating worship. Any unusual treatment of them would be dismissed from the mind as pertaining to the magic of the master, in which Wambu shared in a humble way.

"These kraits—and two of them, or one, would have sufficed for the purpose - were being, not boiled, but broiled dry, finely roasted, along with the odours belonging to the person whose garment was in the pot with them. They are generally, in a fine fury · but how much more so now!"

The tin lid to the pot did not sit quite tight. Every now and then it was lifted by the furious wriggling within, and tiny diabolic heads appeared beneath the edge. They were promptly snapped in again, and the lid set firm, by Wambu who leaned forward from his position on the ground. With a trifle more of leverage a krait would have been out of the pot, for each body contains a spring. It was

an effective scene of *tableric* although upon so smal a scale, outdoors and at noontide. The flames of the slow fire made a crackling and shone blue in the daylight. Whenever the lid rose there was a minute virulent hissing, fit to be described by Lucan.

Hari Pant stood dignified, controlling things but not interfering. It would have been as dangerous for him as for any ordinary mortal to touch the kerails.

"For downright cleverness commend me to the Brahmin *lok*," said Wambu after one of these occasions. "It is the twice-born who know how to direct things"—bringing his palms in reverence to his forehead.

"That's all right, Wambu You just attend to your business."

From his immeasurable superiority of position he could speak in a brotherly way, as most can in India, to an ally who did not wish to presume.

"Now these little fools inside the pot there," continued Wambu, grinning within his fringe of white beard, "believe that the person whose smells they get is responsible for their being half-roasted. Was there ever such lack of sense? No matter. As soon as the lid is removed, watch the straight line which they will make"—and he dart d his forefinger through the air—"for him whom they hold the cause of their torments There will be one Faringhi the less polluting Bharata. We have tried it before! But where did your reverence get this idea, of which there is nothing in my inherited snakecraft?"

"We have to be alert, we, the guardians of the shrines," said Hari Pant, condescending. "I found the idea in a big book about Borneo Pet, a huge island far away. It is practised there . and, thought I, why not in Bharata just as well? As you know, Wambu, we tried experiments. All Indian snakes

will not answer for the purpose; but these will. Has not the roasting gone far enough? There is no use in overdoing anything."

After peeping into the pot, Wambu agreed.

"Stand aside, master!" he cried, removing the lid.

And the kraits, scarcely perceptible, darted out like bullets to their billet

A very few minutes later Corsand, who had fallen into uneasy slumber, was awakened by bites and by deadly pain all over him

He yelled for his servants, he clutched in the air like Laocoon but could grasp no serpent He felt himself swelling portentously, growing unconscious When his servants tardily appeared their master was dead, fallen upon the floor in an attitude of struggling, and already frightfully puffed out, as if his body were full of poison which was at work. One of them, with more intelligence than his fellows, had seen a krait vanishing in a glance He made much of this, and of the condition of the body. But the other servants could only remember how Corsand had complained of fever.

Hari Pant, whose kindly care of Dr. Fulton had reminded people that he was himself a physician, was the first to suspect. It was he who took charge of things, since the only other medical personage in Lingam was a third-grade assistant apothecary.

The shocking condition of Corsand's body demanded instant hiding away under ground. There is often that urgency in India, but seldom to such a degree. There could be no thought of conveying the poor body to the capital, as had been done in a bullock-cart years before, when the Collector of the British district of Tulsipur, to the northward, died suddenly and at a greater distance away.

So Corsand was buried the same day, without Christian or any other ceremony, at the hands of the Mangs who shrank from their task. In truth he was rudely huddled away, well outside the sacred precincts in a spot the full infamy of which was never known to Europeans. A rather artistic monument but more desolate than words can express, like so many destinies in India, was afterwards erected to him there at the personal insistence of the Maharaja who was wont to carry his point about once a year.

It was Hari Pant who stood forward as authorising the rapid burial of the Acting Resident. He commended the servant who had seen the krait, and inclined to think that the explanation lay that way. But opinions were divided, here and all over India. Much was made of the testimony of the servants who insisted that their master was in the first stages of fever. This seldom works at such speed; but one must be astonished at nothing in India.

All the people of Lingam rejoiced to be rid of Corsand, and held that Shiva had delivered them. The krait was a Punchinello's secret. If Hari Pant's agency was not expressly known, it was felt that he, under the god, or the god working through him, had somehow intervened on behalf of orthodox Hindus.

"This is how Shiva slays his enemies. *Harr, harr*, Mahadeo!"

Betty, who had done wrong not knowing that she did so, heard of the death of the Resident Sahib without care or curiosity. It was not until long afterwards that she could put two things together.

What next happened in Lingam was of the nature of the day after the fair.

Hira took care of Daniel during some days in

her house, where he was singularly out of place. Then she hired a bullock cart with a driver intelligent enough to look after him on the way, and packed him off to Malwach. Here love and Daya's good nursing worked wonders.

Though Cousland died in a post to which he had been nominated by the Supreme Government, it was in Bombay, so much meant, where he rightly belonged and was best known, that his death made the greatest sensation.

He, the scholar who could give up his book for his duty, had been a favourite with the Governor, Lord Chillingham, of whom it was commonly said that though able both to read and to write, he seldom did either.

"Dead like that, my very best young man?" his Excellency kept saying.

He could not seem to get over it for the first days. It was to his Civilian Chief of Police that he usually talked on the subject.

"I shall never get to the bottom of the strange things in this fascinating country. I don't mind if I die in the effort. India is more and more interesting than Australia. I hope they'll give me Madras when I'm done here, though it hasn't such fine races or, consequently, such pretty girls. Talking of them, what a fate for Miss Grant to come out to. We must take counsel how to break the blow for her."

But what could Lord Chillingham, the jolly bachelor, do?

This was more in the line of Archdeacon Wilton, who, archidiaconal, angular and dismal, with plump Miss Wilton at his side, was allowed to be the first to board the Malwa on the Friday morning.

However close the Arabian Sea may have been, there is always some breeze from one cause or another. This is lost when you fall to the leeward

of Bombay. At the entrance to it, the climate knocks you down as with a sledge-hammer. And here was sledge-hammer news.

Colonel Little had continued his protective attentions to Agnes Grant until this moment. "She'll never be able to live in Bombay," he was saying to himself as he noted the paleness of her cameo features, though the blue eyes were bright beneath a triumphant hat.

"She'll never need to," he concluded, as he quickly took in a certain funereal aspect of things, the absence of the bridegroom whom he would have known by sight, and the presence, in quiet mufti behind the archdeacon, of the Governor whose features all Englishmen knew. In an instant, too the morning's newspapers were aboard, with stories of Corsand and articles about him

"Come here, Miss Grant," said Little

He led her, pressing something, into a corner away from the absorbed throng of passengers always pressing forward. Then he went to bring the archdeacon to her.

Afterwards he effaced himself during many days. There were later months, while she was recovering at Mahableshwar, when he showed himself with discretion. She did not return alone to England, as was expected of her; and his patient suit was rewarded.

But "Who killed Cock Robin?" Lord Chillingham could not let the question be.

"There's the finest adventure in the world here yet, Harold," he kept saying to the Chief of Police. "If you won't find out by regular methods I will by irregular. Corsand went to help a fool doctor in love, and I want to go to avenge him. I believe the Viceroy would put the matter into my hands if I asked."

That, however, is a story by itself.

Shiva had undoubtedly conquered in the jousting. Those who had approached too close to the flame were dead or nearly so. It seemed useless for their friends to try anything.

And the wife of this world
Hesitated, laughing in his sleeve.
He must fetch all his world
There's no other way to shove

THE END

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